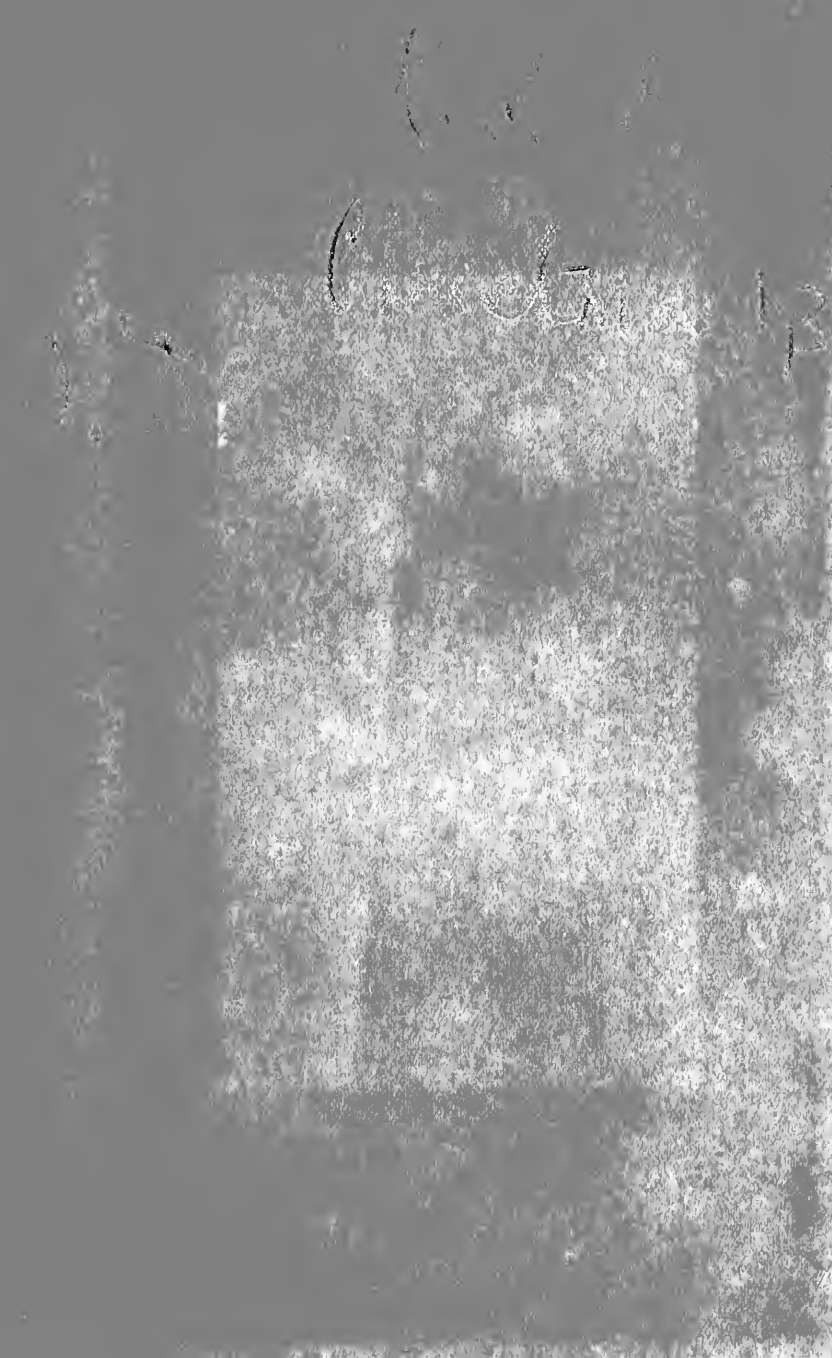




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*J. W. Newley.  
from E. C. Newley,  
Christmas 1900*

LETTERS  
OF  
THOMAS EDWARD BROWN



LETTERS  
OF  
THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

AUTHOR OF 'FO'C'SLE YARNS'

EDITED

*WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR*

BY

SIDNEY T. IRWIN

VOL. II

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## LETTERS OF T. E. BROWN

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

RAMSEY,

*January 10, 1894.*

IT is not too late, I hope, to wish you a very happy New Year. You shrank from that rough sea, and I don't wonder; it really was very bad. When will you come over in February? Tell me, and I will order a primrose or two. Last year the fine weather began at the opening of March, and lasted all spring and summer. It was quite delicious. I discovered a new country, the flat land lying between the hills and the north shore, more particularly that portion of it which we call the Curragh (*agh* strong guttural). The Curragh is a green bog, many miles in extent. It is full of bog-plants: for instance, there are whole acres of that most lovely flower the bog-bean. I had conjectured the beauty of this level space, with its sweet winding ways, and in 'Tommy Big-eyes' I had expressed what was after all a merely superficial appreciation. Now I know it. The haunt of innumerable cuckoos, the home of gorse and such

delights, dreams so soothing made up of soft creamy vapours—dreams that are creams in fact, not whipped into artificial luxuries, but placid, smooth, and all but unctuous. So I was very happy there: few people, those that I met very simple and good: for instance, a dear nice woman who was proud of the bog-bean, and knew its *habitat* and the changes of its condition. I felt how much can be done by level surface. The glen, with its rocks and waterfalls and steep hillsides, I absolutely ceased to care for. Tarver felt just the same, and, staying at the Sulby Glen Hotel, always walked out along the plain, not up the glen.

I wish you could come across some time in May, and see this little paradise of a bog. It is perhaps hard to imagine Adam and Eve in a bog, though one of the orchids so abundant there is popularly called 'Adam and Eve.' Add cuckoos galore, and I think you have a fairly decent notion of what might have been the abode of 'our first parents.' Not oriental, I grant, but surely the Orient has had its innings by this time. I should be well content with the Occidental version. Adam was probably a gorgeous sort of person, certainly a *gourmand*. How dreadful all that talk about 'balmy spoils,' 'Sabaean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the blest,' 'ambrosial fruit of vegetable gold,' 'nectareous draughts,' 'groves of myrrh,' and 'cassia, nard,' and God knows what! *Sabaean!* In my Manx paradise there are wholesome smells, and plenty of them.

Of course February will not show the Curraghs at their best.

What a thing it is to have the command of your

own time! It must be admitted that I don't do much. My reading is not exactly desultory; at any rate, it is not sporadic or accidental. I *desult*, but of set purpose, knowing the horse I change to. Milton, as perhaps you observe, occupies me much, and I have revived my old '*Rep.*'<sup>1</sup> This, it strikes me, is a great benefit, and it is undoubtedly a pleasant practice. One knew it in one's youth as a harassing, burdensome task. But that was because one never had proper time, could not expatiate, could not lie down in the shady pastures with Tityrus and Menalcas. Happily I find that my memory is not a bit impaired, and this fact adds wings to my energy, and to my pleasure the sense of security, and the ballast of great example.

My lectures (Reminiscences, and so forth). I sometimes speak for upwards of two hours, and the people listen and seem well pleased. These speeches are asynartete, *solutae* to *dissolutae*. They occasionally give offence, and to sundry kinds of people, but, as a rule, are much appreciated by the vulgar!! They were originally intended as an ἀφορμὴ to a book, *The Island Diocese*. But I don't know whether this will go on.

My tendency at present is to give up all this sort of thing, and to take to poetry again. It would be more serious than most of what I have hitherto written. I have three poems smouldering within me. So there is enough for some time to come. Don't you think it is well to let those things simmer behind the oven for a good long while? I don't feel that they lose at all from the bubblings of Manx

<sup>1</sup> Repetition, 'learning poetry by heart.'

broth and the like that are given off by the crude heat of unpremeditated discourse. I should say that the prose, whether written or orally uttered, is a relief, and that the inner core of gestation (pardon the phrase!) goes on all the better, partly released from the strain of excessive tension, partly recruited from the outer world of converse and experience. In any case I am in no hurry, and I will *read*, whatever betide. For I find that I have read next to nothing all my life; and I will learn Rep. (!); for I find that my mind is singularly lacking in *pabulum*, and wholesome chyle.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 14, 1894.

*Hic et ubique* grey and grim, the heavens shut up in surly discontent, and you revelling in sunshine and flowers. Still I know your Riviera, and defy you to catch up the summer, chase it as you will. Short of the tropics, nothing will avail. That is a little comfort to me, envious.

I have been to Peel and delivered a lecture of some two hours. The best fun at Peel was the second day. Hall Caine gave a dinner to the fishermen and their wives. The place was the 'Shelter,' a room intended as a kind of lounge and reading-room for these fine old gentlemen.

The conditions of the feast, the wedding-garment so to speak, required that you were not a *swell*, not a parson, that you were 'dacent,' and over sixty. It



was ruled that I fulfilled these conditions. Parson I was, but as a successor of the Galilean fisherman I passed muster, and carved an enormous joint of roast beef, and made as much row as possible.

When we had dismissed the desire of eating and drinking, we had a grand 'smook'; and speeches and songs were 'indulged in,' under the presidency as chairman of C., the assistant harbour-master. You remember him at Greeba, a magnificent old salt, who interpreted Molly Charane to us, acute, sensible, and sincere. He made an absolutely perfect speech in proposing the health of Mr. and Mrs. Caine.

I perceive that the elation and depression of literary energy is quite as common among these worthies as with ourselves. C. told me afterwards, with unfeigned concern, of all the 'things' he had meant but failed to bring in. Characteristic too of the common predicament was his exaltation next day. Some praise of mine, given, I must say, most justly and most ungrudgingly, had reassured him and a little more. He told his chums that he didn't know how it was, *but he was carried along that night 'tremulously,' and the wind getting into his sails, he was fairly astonished at himself.* And truly it was a most eloquent epideixis. One passage about Mr. and Mrs. Hall Caine's position in London society, 'dining with lords, dukes, *and the lek,*' was simply gorgeous. 'And here they come down to us plain people, humble folk, and it is their joy to receive us and be kind to us <sup>1</sup>.' Excellent C. I could have

<sup>1</sup> In another part of the letter (omitted) the speech is thus described. 'Good Heavens! C. tore away, broke Priscian's head a thousand

fallen upon his neck—a sturdy thing to fall upon and a reliable.

The *songs* opened with ‘Rock of Ages.’ This was rather stiff; but the leader was a Gorry, a beautiful descendant of the Vikings, whose face was lighted up with a perfectly divine illumination of piety and tenderness, and all the men and women sang with him. The poor old things could not get over the idea that it was a religious service, could not suddenly disuse their methodistical traditions and habits. Several hymns followed, and it was not without a kind of shock that we found ourselves at last involved in the frank nonsense of ‘Hunt the wren.’ I could not help thinking of my old experience, when ages ago, at Foxdale, in the mountains, I delivered a lecture moderately, but unquestionably secular, studded with funny anecdotes: and all the old women, as they entered, fell upon their knees, and said a prayer, as upon coming into church. It nearly floored me; and I went through my lewd performance with misgivings, shame, remorse. I remember they looked a good deal scared, but, with that admirable goodwill and accommodation to circumstances which is so native to them, they recovered their serenity, and even lent themselves, with a certain sweetness of condonation, to the alien atmosphere, into which *yandhar young Pazon* had introduced them.

The old chaps, distrusting their power of entertainment, had imported into the gathering a very

times into a thousand pieces, assaulted the Nine with untamed audacity, and through rape, fire, and murder strode on, a very storm of splendid anacoluthon and the devil-take-the-hindmost.’

'young chap,' one K. (but all, young and old, are K.'s). 'K. the Buck,' I think he is called, to distinguish him from the other K.'s.

He was dressed to the nines, played the fiddle, and sang music-hall horrors, dallying with a cigar (!), which he smoked nonchalantly as he sang.

To see the old people under this ribald treatment! 'Rock of Ages!' what a bouleversement! They evidently thought it would be ungracious to appear otherwise than pleased. So they twisted their dear old facial muscles into the most complicated skeins of quasi-apprehension, and 'waited for the day' of a proper recovery.

The next hymn they sang, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' they *did* sing. A gentle protest, but a most heart-felt burst of religious fervour; a very ecstasy. Do you wonder if I trembled, and my eyes filled with tears?

K. was all unconscious. K. fell back and resumed his fiddle with a fine alertness which did him credit—never turned a hair. But afterwards, C. apologized to me privately. 'A young man, you see. Of course there must be all surts, and we thought that a little . . . well, it's not the thing; no, no! but still, for all . . .' and so forth. That kind, sagacious, equitable old C.! I had to sing two songs, and tell one story, with such 'vice' as I had saved from the wreck of my two hours' discourse on the previous evening.

I hope I didn't surprise, or overmaster you into the approbation of my sonnet in memory of Bartholomew which you express.

George Pearse's death is, domestically, even a more melancholy occurrence than that of Bartholomew.

He was a very good man, faithful, useful, and, above all things, modest. Oh that modesty! Like Wordsworth's 'gratitude of men,' it leaves me mourning as nothing else can do.

I always liked L. He speaks kindly, you say, of me. But that is not my reason for liking him. A man, perilously on the confines of charlatanry, he has been marvellously delivered by his simplicity and sweetness. One feels how imperfectly he is educated; but that does not matter. Such men are almost independent of education. Of course, I know that a good course of Oxford, both Moderations and Greats, specially the latter, and still more specially a good sousing in the Ethics (Nicomachean by preference!), would have made a different man of him. But he would not have been himself, and that would have been such a pity. I dare say that, even as it is, if you were to dig down through all the detritus and shale of his shambling *γένησις*, you would come upon some solid matter. On that he, very likely, rests at bottom.

TO W. F. TRIMNELL.

(With two songs.)

RAMSEY,

*January 15, 1894.*

I send you two songs as a New Year offering not surely out of date. Both music and words are from Heine's collection (Zürich, 1876), which I think you have. The translations are by me. They are simply intended as a little reminiscence of my life-long association with a good kind friend.

Use them as you like. Do you smoke? If so, you can light your pipe with them.

The happiest of New Years to you and yours. Kind remembrances to Mrs. and Miss Trimnell.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 22, 1894.

I took upon myself to operate upon an offending corn; the result of this brilliant demonstration in surgery is a wound which refuses to be healed. My doctor scolded me tremendously for undertaking such a professional function with so much lightness of heart. He is just off to an inquest which involved tragic circumstances. I have thought of hardly anything else ever since. It was a case of suicide. I can't get rid of it. Poetry ought to be able to deal with it, and bring me to the true *κάθαρσις*, but I don't know. I sometimes think that poetry fails me at such need, that it was never meant for anything but a beautiful toy. It can keep the pace of noble tragedy. But how about the ignoble? Or, if all tragedy deals with the noble, what are we to do with what we, loosely perhaps, call the 'tragedies of humble life'? How can I reconcile myself to this *fact*? I feel as if I would rush up to God with her this very moment. But, says Goldsmith, 'when lovely woman,' &c. Yes, 'to die,' dear Goldie; 'die,' one knows what that means, my sweet moralist: it means *under affecting conditions*, with pathetico-picturesque surroundings, *πάθος* 'with everything handsome about' it. But then, these brutal complications, no pathetic prettiness,

no *πάθος* in a tea-cup can deal with these. They are foul, sordid; but I must insist on their being admitted and justice done to them. A doctor has to face these things. *Nihil humani*—he seems to say. But were we created with the capacity of digesting horrors so unutterable? Are they human? *Sunt lacrymae rerum*; but are these *facta res*? Are they not perhaps men *monsters*? Devilish common monsters, I can tell you. Just one instantaneous photograph of the pathology at its supreme crisis—that would be something; but I suppose it would be sheer madness—so jurors seem to think—and no Kodak would snap that. But poor A.—no. I am convinced she was both innocent and sane. Go get thee to work! and write me frequent letters.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 28, 1894.

My foot is still bad; confinement to the house for such a long time is a disaster. If protracted much longer it will damage my spring. And of all things that is the idea that troubles me most. That the time of the singing of birds should come, and I should be secluded from the note of turtle, or, par exemple, cuckoo, seems to me a most intolerable nuisance.

My Manx Songs, words and music by T. E. B., have now advanced to their fifth number. What fun it will be some day to send them to Crossley! Perfect barbarism, of course. I can't even defend them as relics of Keltic music. The tunes are of my own invention, wholly lewd and desperate, though distantly

imitating the native measures, only, I fear, by the concoction of analogous barbarism.

It only needs a very slight hint to set me off on the road to sheer and untamable and dissolute heathendom. Bedad, sorr, it's niver very far from me at the best of times—just a bit of a wall to jump over, and there you are, free and happy, and most vulgarly unconditioned.

I am much interested in a young Manxman, who seems to be endowed with a very special gift, i.e. historical enthusiasm, which, flaming up from depths of archaeology and suchlike horrors, culminates in Romance. Why not? You begin (*he* begins) with the architectural study of a building (e.g. St. German's Cathedral, Peel). As you go on measuring, and noting facts and figures, some fire is generated, kindles, smoulders for a while; gradually a mad passion is formed, a genuine distress amative. A person supervenes historically known, but very imperfectly. Imagination is inflamed: the story trying to germinate. And all this naturally, inevitably. Query—is it the legitimate outcome of these d—d facts and figures? Manifestly the man can't help himself; he is fairly stricken.

Add that he is a scorner of contemporaries, totally incapable of discovering in this century or much later than the Conquest any being male or female that can interest him, or is worthy of his attention. This strong fierce man has become rapturously enamoured of a Manx princess (historical), say 1100 A.D. His condition is positively delicious. What would you not give to be in such a predicament? Go it, say I!

go it, Pygmalion of the turbaries<sup>1</sup>! Surely nothing but good can come of this Rapture. People may doubt, and sneer, and say 'How about History?' That is all very well, but here is a man who is simply insane about measurements, who will compass sea and land to get one wretched proselyte of a fact, and it all ends in this. It is not a case of effort and whipping of flanks. He *must* do this. This is the unquestionable efflorescence of the state in which he has got himself by the most sober pursuit of dry, technical investigations. Ought he not to rejoice 'therefor'? Of course I find it hard to conceive the process; but there it is. And, if a man tells me he loves a woman, I believe him, and if she lived about 1100, why not? And, if she was a lady devoted to Cistercian missions, in heaven's name, why not? And how about this last fact in the *nexus*? Peel Cathedral is a Cistercian building. And 'I'll tell ye what, sorr,' the Cistercian *ḡθos*, the Cistercian propaganda—but hang it! let's break into Manx verse:—

The Cistercian propagandhar  
And the lek o' yandhar—  
An Alexandhar!  
The nice, for all!  
And Pope Anastasiers,  
And goodness grayshers,  
Sure it's quite façatiers  
In ginerall!

Yes, I am getting more and more convinced that the great mistake about us is that we were born in the professional class. Is it my recently acquired

<sup>1</sup> 'Turbaries'—I read the word with difficulty—'places for digging turf'—a note for the benefit of the ignorant (e. g. myself).



passion for the bog-bean, or what? *Terrae filius*; *filius paludis*; that would be about it.

I believe that there is still a perfectly sweet little bit of a bog in Ulster from which poor Jinny Drumgoole set forth on her journey to the Mona of Caesar, and dragged behind her across the Irish Sea that 'thraill' of the turf. Faith, it deludes one to this day. And I think you know that our bogs are inhabited by a dark people, the Carysdoo, and that they bewilder and entice poor travellers as the mermaids overpower the fishermen. So there's for you.

I am looking forward with great interest to M.'s development. Having long ago abandoned History as a serious study, I don't wish it to become a ludicrous one; but, whenever you strike a spark from its flints, follow! follow! through brake and briar!

Through brake and briar,  
The bog is a-fire;  
Let all the boys hollo—  
Follow! Follow!

Don't you think it is about time to vote the closure (clôture) on this bosh? Now good-night!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

February 6, 1894.

*Prosit amasse*<sup>1</sup>. That is the note. And so I pray for myself; how much more fitly and fruitfully may young hearts pray! *Prosit*—may it bring forth the fruit of good living, of honourable action, of noble endeavour. So shall it be more than a sigh and a *siste, viator*.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from some verses I wrote on F. M. Bartholomew.

Strange mutilated obsequies those at Madura! Did you read the letter from the Bungalow keeper? a decent creature, I dare say. He only saw Bartholomew at that awful disadvantage in grips with death, and yet the poor native saw qualities that we recognize through the haze of distance and the disfigurement of imminent collapse. 'He was so witty, so liberal, so kind, so good-humoured, so clever.' I think those were the words. Don't we get a glimpse as from a poor but not untruthful mirror of the magnanimous Englishman? The more I think of him, the more I revere him. The absence of all show, the deep affection, the simplicity of motive—where will you find the like? He took no part in functions of display; but, at need, there you had him. What had he to support that firm spirit? what loves, ambitions, hopes? A pure and marvellous man. For when we have climbed our dung-hills, and crowed our crows, we think we see him pass through some diviner air, sheathed in proof of righteousness and peace, profoundly humble, the very opposite of the pride that apes humility: humility the base on which pride rested serenely balanced, a rational, quiet dignity. Let us remember him and love him. *Prosit amâsse!*

I suffer a good deal of pain, and a great deal of discomfort. I have called in a 'Doctor in Consultation.' The man is English, and has the virtue of his country—is prompt, decisive, speaks out. My dear Manx doctor is simply delightful, but so charmed to talk with you that he quite forgets that you are cursing every moment which postpones your getting

out into the space which is not an arena for talk, escaping into silence and the company of yourself.

The winter is supposed rather than believed to have gone. Sixteen crocus-blooms underneath my window babble of spring. But really this is about the dearest time of all. None of you come over; the islanders, satiate with Christmas and delicately crapulous in their pleasant way, withdraw for the most part from social contingency.

At first, and while you are instinctively turned from the ways and habits of English life, you quite rejoice in the change. Then you begin to feel a lack. You become, as nearly as possible, alarmed, dismayed. Weeks go by, and you are conscious that you have not exchanged the merest glimmering of an idea, literary or otherwise intellectual, with one of your friends. You begin to get discouraged. Man cannot live by garrulity alone. You desiderate *discursus*, and have a melancholy recollection how you once talked with your fellows. After all the world has advanced a little since the sixteenth century, and I would fain catch on to the old flirt, hag though she be. I don't suppose that what one calls the world was ever, at least since Noah, so *arriéré* as our dear little island. Occasionally a Manxman lapses into London. He has seen a little of men and things; and this he brings home with him to our poor incorrigible Artaxata.

The truth dawns upon me that my Oxford and Clifton life has wrought something in me that is neither Manx nor Metropolitan, and that I am not as self-sufficing as I had imagined. I wait for letters

with almost feverish anxiety, and never can have enough.

I do sometimes get letters that transcend all current interests. For instance, the other day I received one from an old pupil whom I had imagined to be dead. He is not dead, however, but very much alive in the parts about Virginia, U.S.A. He was the brightest, sunniest, cleverest pupil I ever had. He was at King William's; and I have not seen him now for thirty-three years. My *seely* Manx lectures do this for me. The one I delivered in Peel at the beginning of January has got out there, and has stirred my old friend to recognition and *Wiederanknüpfung*. So I shall as soon as possible *wiederanknüpf* him with a letter. He goes back to my old boating days at Derby Haven. I had forgotten that I used to take boys out with me in the old Custom-house boat of the period. He has reminded me of those days of dawn. Well, they were strangely happy days. I forget whether I had corns then; but I rather think I had.

The days of dawn,  
The early morn,  
Without a corn—  
Oh, joy to be born, &c.

This is rather idiotcy. But it reminds me of a heresy, I think of N.'s, and certainly of Bagehot's. These two great representatives of the English spoken near Stratford-atte-Bow agreed in maintaining the fitness of the rhyme dawn x morn; not, let us freely admit, as pronouncing *dawn* like *dorn*, but as giving *morn* the sound of *mawn*. I shudder when I think of this, especially of N., squeezing the tones through nostril,

not spectacle-bestridden, but battle-sniffing and dogmatic. My paper on H. Burrows appeared last Saturday. The 'villain' has expurgated it a little, of course shovelling out one of my nattiest allusions—'worthy scion of the old Laudian house.' Laudian house for St. John's (Oxford) belongs surely to the *parole* challengeable from English men of letters.

Love to all,  
Both great and small!

TO MRS. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

February 9, 1894.

This once a week threatens to be a failure. That was also, I remember, the fate of a magazine so called. Suppose we make it a bi-monthly. To that extent the garrulity of old age may surely be trusted to produce a *quantum sufficit* of things memorable or otherwise. I know how greatly you liked our dear old friend Bartholomew. Liking was hardly the word. What we all seem to have felt was mingled love and reverence. I have had sent to me various letters bringing up the story to its tragic close. Did you read a letter from the Native who keeps the Travelers' Bungalow at Madura? It is so touching: even in this poor shambling sort of mirror you see reflected, imperfectly of course, but unmistakably, the noble qualities of the dying Englishman. He was 'so kind, so courteous, so good-humoured, so liberal, so clever'—those were something like the words. How one sees him in the superficial representation! That is Bartholomew; not a finished portrait, but the man

as seen by a gentle, not, perhaps, altogether disinterested soul, such as we may imagine that of 'the mild Hindoo.' There was a letter from himself to his brother, the last he ever wrote. It was dated Trichinopoly. It gave an account of a visit to a temple crowded with natives keeping the feast; and the chief magistrate crowned him with a garland, according to custom, and offered fruits. Then he caught the cholera, but did not know that he had. And in the letter you even get an echo of his well-known laugh, borne to us now across the deep silent river.

Dr. Percival went up to Clifton the Sunday before last to a kind of memorial service. He himself preached. Both Bartholomew and Pearse were the subject—the two Devonshire lads, splendid offspring of the great county. He says he found it hard 'to keep himself together,' and that he did what he did 'very indifferently'; but we shall see. W. read some prayers from the Burial Service with an unaffected pathos and simplicity which were noticed both by Percival and Irwin.

I wrote to ——. Poor thing! Mourning and woe! . . . Money! money! It is now, and in presence of such hard facts, that I invoke the fiend, otherwise sordid and contemptible enough, but not now. Now I would fain make truce with him: for what things one might do!

Have you such a thing as a snowdrop about you? We have exactly sixteen crocuses. They are a great comfort to me looking out at my window. For I am, if you please, a prisoner; have been ever since New Year's Day.

How are you all? When things are brightest and springiest my mind often takes its flight to Devonport. I see Charlotte and baby (God forgive my flippancy!), and I 'bless them unawares.' Then the Worthington towers above you all and centralizes you all in a loving group. 'Oh that I were there!' It is not irrelevantly that I have drifted into *In dulci jubilo*. The girls send their love.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 11, 1894.

My foot is making progress; and, as regards sleep, what say you to eight and a half hours last night of the *absolute*?

The 'Marsh Warbler' is simply exquisite. A real simplicity reigns throughout; no sham, mind, no effort to be simple, but running off the reel, *absolute* music. So that's very good. H. B. has just sent me a book (type-written) of his poems. 'Cædmon's Song,' one of the longest, is quite first-rate. Many of the lyrics are very sweet.

Such sleep as that of last night is enough to make me sing. And my sleep, if not dreamless, is full of the loveliest 'visions you ever.' By Jove, I wish I could write some of them down, or, what would be far better, paint them! The other night I talked French most brilliantly to a great audience, and I have also carried on conversations in that language of wits and courtesies. One was with a young man who refused to do anything in the world *because he was so ugly (vilain)*. His mother and a little sister

were present. I lectured this young man magnificently, *matre approbante*. We had to talk French on account of the little girl: it was he began it. And so we talked, and so I told him that he was an *ingrat*, and I don't know what; when suddenly, like a little robin, out burst the four-year-old sister upon him in full song; gave it him in French, paradeigmatized him in a most awful way. Oh, such a lovely little bulbul of a thing! No, not bulbul either, rather bull-dog, if that were admissible. Let us fall back upon robin—great big-chested little darling—such a throat! The young man was a frank cynic. The mother was not a sympathetic woman, but she seemed attracted by my oratory and its purport, looked as if she thought 'the man might be made use of'; thorough woman of the world; concerned about her son, though, and unhappy.

But the bulbul-robin was gorgeous. Was it Fowler<sup>1</sup>, with his 'Marsh Warbler,' that turned my sleep to these charming issues? I don't know whether you are aware that I am a real good dreamer, and I remember my dreams, and can, more or less, give them an adequate form. And they last so. I feel quite sad when the ivory gate closes.

The bay is crowded with shipping and I have seen one gannet.

#### TO AN OLD PUPIL.

RAMSEY,

February 11, 1894.

I don't know how sufficiently to thank you for this delightful book. . . . I am sure you must have

<sup>1</sup> W. Warde Fowler.



derived endless solace from the impressions of which they (the poems) are the record, and I do sympathize with you so entirely, both in the 'states of mind' they indicate, and the singular felicity of expression attained. 'Ἀμφιδέξιος, you have two good strings to your bow, and they are both of the true Loxian twist. I hope you will go on to use them habitually. . . .

L. S. has thrown me a tow-rope. This is very nice. I have also had a hail from Philadelphia and Virginia. The fact is you are towing me into port, you young sea-rovers, not as a 'Fighting Téméraire,' but a peaceful old galley, crowned with a few sparse wreaths—towing me into the *longus secessus*.

Insula portum

Efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto

Frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos.

Yes, I want no more of the *undae*: *aequora tuta silent* will do for me. But you must look me up from time to time, and bring me spoils.

Just now I have a Burns fit on me. Isn't he astounding? I have read hardly anything else for weeks. I suppose it is worse than useless making a pilgrimage to Ayre (*sic*). Once, nay twice, we spent the summer holidays on the Clyde; but it was impossible to approach the 'Mausoleum' (!! ) business, and in such company.

One project I greatly cherish, but have never carried out—a good long draught of Scott's country. I mean all those hills and dales of Ettrick, Teviot, and so forth. Could you ever take that with me? My grandfather came from Jedburgh, and I have an inextinguishable longing *antiquam exquirere*

*matrem*. It must surely be a glorious ramble in the early, tripperless summer.

TO J. C. TARVER.

RAMSEY,

February 18, 1894.

We are frozen. When is this wretched spring coming? It lies hid in cunning places, and we must cower and shiver with it. And the winds! Good gracious! Was there ever anything like it? And on New Year's Day I made a holocaust of my most sacred corn, and hurt my foot in some miserable way, so that I have been a close prisoner almost ever since. Now I really do want to get out. I don't care to nurse myself in domestic snugness, though the weather out-of-doors might fairly suggest that alternative. Sir, I want to go forth and find Nature, and when I have found her, 'bring her 'ome with me.' She is but a draggle-tail and a slut, though, just now. There is a kind of nakedness which is no good. Let her bide!

So Flaubert comes to the birth. I hardly know what you mean by speaking of him as having found out his true form only when it was too late. After all, do you think *Bouvard et Pécuchet* was his centre of gravity? I fancy it was a marvellously happy tentamen in a new direction: but I must consider the *Bovary* and the *L'Éducation sentimentale* the essential Flaubert. Casting about for the adequate expression, he made two great dives which were not in the line of his proper motion. One was *Salammbô*,

the other *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. They are both magnificent, both quite at right angles to the true Flaubert who walks straight on in the absolutely real life of the Bovary. He amazes one with his *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. It is as if a dying man suddenly started up a convulsive athlete, a buffoon of the first rank, and he says, 'There! I can do *that* too! You didn't expect it! No?' and a shrug and a shiver, and he falls dead.

I shall be full of interest in this book; and I believe it will be popular and profitable.

But I have got off my French hobby, and am now great in Burns. I can't venture to say what I feel. When the Burns fever is on me (as it often is) I become dithyrambic, rhapsodic, idiotic. Hardly any man shakes my very guts like him. I didn't join the insular Scotch folk on the 25th ult., but that was on account of my self-induced lameness. They had a dinner at Douglas. If I had gone and spoken, I should probably have made a goose of myself. Did you ever try to write a Burns song? I mean, the equivalent in ordinary English of his Scotch. Can it be done? A Yorkshireman—could he do it? A Lancashire man (Waugh)? I hardly think so. The Ayrshire dialect has a *Schwung* and a confidence that no English county can pretend to. Our dialects are apologetic things, half-ashamed, half-insolent. Burns has no doubts, and for his audience unhesitatingly demands the universe. Or has his dialect taken this position because it was his? If so, then, given the same genius, and subject it to the same conditions, and you will have a Suffolk

man or a Glo'stershire, who will vindicate for his dialect the imperial seat, and make it, at least, *the* 'lingua rustica' for all England. Poor Burns never approached this. But Tennyson did. He had, of course, other and more exquisite instruments, the *septem cicutae* of Pan: but when he did take up his Lincolnshire, was it not admirable? And after such a performance as the 'Northern Farmer,' does it not seem almost natural to accept that as the real thing? But then it was a *tour de force*. As he wrote it I dare say he had an access of tender mimicry; but that was all. But Burns is a blackbird and mimics nothing. He is the inevitable. Still our beloved Tennyson is no accident, not he. But he is a scholar and self-conscious, as are the scholars; not a *dilettante*, no! no! But you can't eat your cake, and have your cake. By becoming scholars (Heaven save the mark!) we have gained something; but we have lost—I had almost said—everything.

TO MRS. WORTHINGTON.

March 5, 1894.

You will readily understand that there is little going on here with which I might hope to *object* you. There are the fitful advances of the spring, and the ordinary transitions 'from the blue bed to the brown,' but that is all. The Vicar's alternation of chambers is literally carried out on these premises. The perpetual storms compel us to have two bedrooms, one behind and one before (I had almost said, 'And one behind the parlour door'). At the very top, and in

the exact centre of the house, there is a sky-light which raves like a bacchanal or a pythoress. Its position is selected with marvellous sagacity. Do what you like, you must lay your account with the fiend, No. 3, central.

I have had an old colleague staying with me for a week-end. He came in a storm, and left in a hurricane. I wish you and Mr. Worthington knew him. The neighbours here are full of it that he has invented a 'New Religion.' To this they sometimes add that *I* (Mr. Brown) am his only convert. You should have seen us at it.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*March 7, 1894.*

Percival's sermon is very good. One bit is magnificent—of Cay—'how his memory is still shining in their hearts like a lamp of sacred fire.'

My poor sonnet! Two misprints are simply intolerable. For 'as' read 'so.' But the horror is what follows. The wretch, having mistaken 'so' for 'as,' thought to restore the grammar by changing the punctuation. Observe the result—a comma ends the octave!!! So there is no sonnet at all!

My first pipe is just smoked, and I feel more composed. But the old versifier in me is hard to be appeased.

Yesterday, I picked my first wild primrose. I had searched all manner of dells and coverts without success, naturally thinking, that where there was shelter from these detestable winds, there would lurk

the little darlings. Norrabirravit (now, what is that ?) ; right in the very teeth of pitiless exposure (rum phrase !) I found the bonny little wretch, laughing and stark—the young rip ! They will soon be coming in troops.

Since M. left I have been regaling myself with the *Eclogues* and a book of *Herodotus*. The finished art of the former, and the *naïveté*, not above suspicion of irony and positive poking fun, which seems the latter, are an endless joy.

Little B. writes to me, he wants a place. He is a good fellow. The staff having to be reduced, little B. was bracketed with another man to leave. Little B. chose to leave, because the other man has a widowed mother dependent on him, and no private means. *Mortua quinetiam iungebat corpora vivis*, quoth little B. in allusion to this coupling of the possible *abeuntes*. And he goes off, smiling, chuckling, perhaps, over this classical conceit, and with all possible regard and affection for the involuntary Mezentius.

Of such men are made heroes. Admirable little B. ! And I—I—well, that octave ! oh heavens ! that mulled octave !!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

March 11, 1894.

I have resolved to give up the platform ; it is too dissipating. Still it was very pleasant. I spoke, I sang, I mimicked, I was the *πολύτροπος* buffoon, much to the satisfaction of my audience.

Next day Miss Graves took me to see M.

She lives in a quaint old house. Before the door

opens you know that, dismal as it is, you will find inside a spacious, old-fashioned hall and staircase. You must know M. is a great admirer of mine, and has been from her childhood. Ages ago she heard me lecture on Thackeray and Dickens. Can't you fancy the crude balderdash? But M. was delighted, never forgot it, quoted to me sundry 'fine passages.' They were farmers, lost the farm, but still retained the old house.

M. was in Manchester: longed for Dickens: saw a *David Copperfield* in a shop window: (*creta notandus*): quoted to me Miss Mowcher.

Goodness is her native food, and well it agrees with her—a charity that thinks no evil; a love of literature the most genuine; an enthusiasm that would melt your most hardened cynic.

M. took me up the broad staircase to see the view of Peel Hill behind; and as we reached the landing, I looked down another lateral flight of steps, and saw a curious, devious descent, into what seemed cellars—very suggestive of the old smuggling days.

My lecture was fairly attended, but not by the people I wanted. The men (fishermen) are busy preparing their boats for the herring season, and have already begun to live on board. (They look splendid, those boats, and the big fellows, with great heavy coils of rope round their shoulders, as they tread sturdily the quays, are magnificent.)

The upper ten constituted my audience. N. laboured to defend me against the charge of 'ridiculing the Manx,' using the stock arguments: 'Did Burns make fun of the Scotch? Did the great Sir Walter?'

. . . . You can imagine my discomfort at being pitch-forked into the company of the *Di majores*.

After the lecture a young man proposed a vote of thanks. A most charming and very stylish young man, accent consummate of the English, plenty to say for himself, said with faultless manner, but listened to by the audience incredulously, and somewhat impatiently!

He told them of some old extravagance of mine which I confess I had forgotten. But I suppose I must have said sometime, and somewhere, that when I returned to the island I 'kissed the very cushags' (ragwort so fine and abundant here, might be considered the national plant = shamrock, &c.). He told them this, and added—'Many of us would have liked to have been those cushags, and shared those kisses.' This was terrible. I blushed! The 'gintale' audience tittered. The young man went on imperturbably.

Well, we are Kelts, and it cannot be helped. The fact is, we Manxmen, young Z. and for the matter of that, myself, are all Phantasts. God knows what dreams we have! But, for the most part, innocent and harmless enough.

TO E. RYDINGS.

March 14, 1894.

Many thanks for the story of M. It is eminently characteristic. Unhappily one is so fettered here by the absurd susceptibilities of silly people, that the anecdotic field is very seriously curtailed. Nearly



all the stories about him have a comic tendency. It is impossible to tell them without exciting a smile.

Now our Manx folk cannot understand how one can laugh at a man and, at the same time, love and respect him. Want of humour, I suppose. But it is a great nuisance, and a great impediment. I am getting bored by it, and shall not probably trouble them much more.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

March 18, 1894.

I have read the two dialogues with the utmost pleasure. They are most exhilarating. Indeed the *Ship* is a perfect carnival of fun. The irony of the *Parasite* is a tremendously long pull at one rope, but it is very great. Though not having the original by me, I can divine the translation to be admirable. As English, at any rate, it is faultless, bright as old beans! I laughed consumedly over the *Ship*. Lucian's own interpositions are so exquisitely humorous.

By-the-bye, as regards *Dodo*, you have the advantage of me. Perpend! help and enlighten! This is just what I feared would come to pass. I mean, separation from my contemporaries. Observe then! I have never heard of *Dodo*. Imagine the plight of a man who is totally 'out of it.' The world goes on, loses the ornithological Dodo, and gets its human (or inhuman) Dodos, and I know nothing about it.

The great stars shine in the heaven of literature, as they've shone since Milton, and I do not miss a single constellation. Has anything happened to

Orion? Is Arcturus wavering? Do the Pleiades observe the time of their setting, or have loose principles set in among the *μετέωρα*, and are the Gods laughing at us? Surely not! Yet this *Dodo* comes floating across the sphere! Whence? Whither? Let me have a resolution.

I have only a very imperfect knowledge of Cowley's Prose. But is it not astonishingly modern? I remember that impression. Johnson too, you will remember, notices that: I think so at least. He was both a tranquil and brilliant creature—Cowley! Grant Allen does well in his *Queen Dido*. Have you seen it? In *Longman's* I fancy? Really capital. His Dido is the Queen Wasp—*dux femina facti*. He surely is very good on Natural History.

*Gratulare!* The day before yesterday I walked fifteen miles! and was not very tired. The day was glorious. The way led through curragh and gorse hedges (banks); and I picked a big nosegay of primroses. This first-born of the spring is now in splendid form—bless it!

Yes, I am going to the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth. Of Wagner why should I discourse to you remote *in partibus immusicorum*?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

April 1, 1894.

I see you at Pensford. Violets! No, we have none here, except of course the dog-violet, which will soon be abundant. I suppose our neglect of it is not merely owing to the absence of that vulgar com-

modity, smell, but to the presence in its sweet-scented sister of qualities which it would be hard to define, qualities of form and colour, mystic and unutterable.

I have not been able to write much of late. Still I have written eleven songs, with music. A sad waste of time, I fear. But I have the fit upon me, and am hugely enamoured of a plan for counter-acting, counter-writing, counter-composing the music-hall songs now invading the silly rustics everywhere. Wherever you go, you hear the wretched babes and sucklings discoursing of 'the man that broke the bank' at somewhere—Monaco is it? Or 'a bicycle for two.' It is very deplorable. Blessed little beautiful things that might well bear palms and follow Christ on His entry into Jerusalem. No doubt on Olivet you will soon hear (or has not the Jaffa railway already introduced?) the same refrain.

I am writing songs partly of sentiment, partly of fun, for fishers, farm-lads, and so forth. I should like to get them into circulation (make them popular) by singing them at lectures and concerts when the right sort of people would be present to take them up. But this *αιιδός* notion of mine will be very exacting; my voice, though still fairly good, is not what it once was; the clergy will look askance; and my rivals will have an awful pull over me: it is so hard to win a people back to honest, healthy barbarism. The affections (domestic, &c.) are a great power, and that's my only chance. Even so, the success of my enterprise, if any, is like to be posthumous. *Post humum, post humum!* All right, if I can only grip from my grave the *μετάνοια* of the children's

children. *This* faith I have, that the world will not go on for ever in the pursuit of baseness. Some day there will be an 'antiquam exquirite matrem,' and that not a sentimental slobber, but *to purpose*.

Both you and I have a great tendency to look backward: now do let us try to conquer this native bent, and look forward! If we could only see what is coming upon the earth, the "preparations of the dawn" (doesn't Jeremy Taylor use the phrase?), I believe it would make us glad. I don't think of or care about *perfectibility*, and that electrical scientific sort of business. I think I see plainly that the human heart is the centre of everything, and I have no doubt it will triumph, and regenerate the dear old *Welt* in which we are embedded. Excellent, Herr Braun! Vortrefflich! Wunderschön! There! go back to your dunghill, and drop this star-gazing.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

April 7, 1894.

How is your cold? no doubt, dead and buried. I have a vicious toothache. Yet is it not somewhat of a distinction at my time of life to have teeth, and teeth that can ache? Most of my contemporaries, and many of my juniors, male and female, have shed their dental honours, and grin at me from rows of pearly symmetry. The dentist has done his best or his worst: but I am still *capable de tout*, and look at his brass-plate as yet innocent of the gold-plate to which I must be ultimately consigned. But the

middle distance is 'an aching void.' Oh that it were all over! My contemplated visit to Bayreuth is evidently moving the profane mirth of people like —. . . . Very likely you have not heard any whisper of my Wagnerian infatuation. Nor indeed have I had a direct facer planted on my proboscis by the actual —; but he has implied much. . . . There is a side of my nature, not a worthless one either, which is withdrawn from the contemplation of the pure scholars, just as there are many and glorious facets of theirs which I can't touch. The 'back of the moon,' that's about it. Let me speak with profound respect for all 'back sides.'

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*April 29, 1894.*

What am I to do?

What am I to do?

Wirrasthru!

This is dreadful. Your letter is dated April 8, and look at my April 29!  $29-8=21=3$  weeks! a lacuna with a vengeance. And your letter<sup>1</sup> was so full of pleasant things—Stonehenge, the Close, the Canon, Lord Radnor! Isn't that Avon a lovely Avon? It is so silvery, and so brimming. Of Stonehenge you know that I am *amantissimus*. It is impossible to convey my idea of what I feel about *The Temple*. It broods over you like the whole

<sup>1</sup> It told of Bemerton and Salisbury, and of an introduction and the presenting it.

of heaven, and grips you with the tenacity of the other region.

G. Herbert! delicious!

The precarious introduction with its results—fine! fine! your sister's dealing with the situation . . . a supreme social picture, in which you yourself are not the least interesting element. I have been through all that. I have it in my bones—the cold, cold, deadly rigidity of that quarter of an hour. Dreadful! But somehow one recovers; life is so made and we go on. It *was* rather like my visit to old S.

The island is all in a shiver about Hall Caine. 'Worse than Tess!' so they say. Ladies can't admit that they read *The Manxman*. Poor innocent Hall; and I such an old pig that Tess enraged me, nor am I quite comfortable about her Manx rival.

We have had Mr. and Mrs. Shenstone with us for a week. Peel specially delighted Shenstone. He liked not the castle only, but also the people, the town, which reminded him of his own old Wells (Norfolk), the dear old homely ways cemented with good faith and good manners.

TO MISS GRAVES.

ARMITAGE RECTORY, RUGELEY,

May 13, 1894.

A genius! that's it. And they are all like that, almost all. Those little falsetti, and affectations, and posings, and putting the best foot foremost; those cravings for appreciation, the egotism, the self-consciousness (go ahead!), all characterize the genius.

You must take him with them—take him or leave him alone. But you seem to seek a portent! A man of genius and a man of hard practical common-sense knocked into one. The world has produced half a dozen such men. They are tremendous. But—Heaven help us!—you must be content with something less than this, or Nature will never get her men off her hands. ‘Sell me a genius,’ say you. ‘Here you are,’ says Nature, handing over a lot, ‘plenty of choice: marked in figures; read—Byron, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge——’ ‘Oh, I want——’ ‘Well, what do you want?’ ‘A strong, powerful, healthy intellect, and genius as a dhooragh<sup>1</sup>.’ ‘Oh, thank you for nothing! We don’t make them. You had better try the shop over the way, or give a special order, and we can try, provided you are willing to wait a thousand years or so!’ . . . This ‘rift within the lute’ of genius is the inseparable accident. I have long learnt to bear with it, and I earnestly desire, for your own sake, that you make up your mind to it. . . . They (geniuses) are all divine babies, and will kiss and scratch in a breath. That is the divine thing in them. Now, don’t be impatient with me. They *must be borne with*; and remember what compensation we have. *Nulla rosa sine spina*: but what a glorious rose blooms among the thorns!

I have no doubt that to many of us it were better if we never got to know men of genius privately. You may depend upon it that, throughout the history of literature, they offended their contemporaries by

<sup>1</sup> Something added to the weight or measure of an article sold; a ‘luck-penny’ = ‘and genius to boot.’

their airs and their bosh, their pettiness and their *asinine conceit*. Never mind! The world has taken its hat off to these men: and so must we. We need not stroke the quills on the 'back of the fretful porpentine'; let us avoid coming into too close contact. Perhaps some of them had better be kept in cages. But chance may domesticate you with one; you may, for instance, marry one. Poor Mrs. Carlyle! And she too a genius. 'Oh, it is a glorious thing! Marry me to the lightning!' Well, just think a bit first. But don't mistake the matter, don't ignore genius, and don't complain of it when you find its silly and shabby adjuncts.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

ARMITAGE, RUGELEY,

May 17, 1894.

I went into Lichfield yesterday. The church itself lovely. I sat in the prebendal stall of *Pipa minor*, which I believe represents in English the estate of *Little Pipe*! Armitage is in Little Pipe. I felt more than mediaeval. But the whole place throws one back upon Feudalism and the Anglo-Normans. There is a subcurrent of modern chatter, ecclesiology, and interests Ruridecanal. But that is all right. I take to these surroundings very quickly. To-day I am going to a full-blown Ruridecanal, where a paper will be read on 'The Ignatian Epistles'! Oh, bless ye! there is much comfort in these old wool-wraps. It is as if you opened an old drawer and took out garments scented with lavender and woodruff. And the young clergy are getting more



modest than they used to be when Anglicanism was crude and perfervid. They don't hammer so defiantly at the foes of the Church as they did thirty years ago. They have a wholesome dread of the new enemies that have sprung up, and betake themselves with more humility to the seniors who have had experience by which these alumni may profit.

And Samuel Johnson, LL.D., sits ponderous and prone upon his pedestal in Lichfield market-place; and I think they will soon have to repair his left boot. The 'arf brick' of some profane person has broken off a large piece of marble or bronze, or whatever it is.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

ARMITAGE RECTORY, RUGELEY,

May 17, 1894.

I am so sorry to hear about Mrs. L. Poor dear creature! so clever, so kind! Her music still rings through my brain: a permanent possession almost like some physical part of her transferred to me. No more will such a shaft of fire pierce my heart. But it was well, was it not, to undergo the tremendous passion? All of you combined so: it was as for a dead lift; and you got me up a good deal. But I don't think I shall get much higher. 'Stick at that,' as the sailors say; but . . . that will do! that will do!

You ask about *pomes*, &c. I have started nothing but trifles. The *White Boy* still hangs fire; also my second Parson's story; also everything.

Some twelve songs I have written and composed.

They are part of an attempt to divert the minds of the Manx people from trumpery music-hall songs, to supply, if possible, the place of traditional, hereditary Literature. But I don't think they will have the desired effect. It is too late—too late! They amuse me, and that is something. Like almost everything I have ever written, they are for myself, to be murmured inwardly, a solace of a sort. No one will ever know anything about them. For greater effort I have no heart, no stomach. It costs more to redeem their souls, so that I must let that alone for ever.

Poor dear Mrs. L. How it<sup>1</sup> tore from her like rending of raiment. The concentration so close and fierce, the dispersion so free and triumphant! . . . 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof'; and wherever she is, she is there. Winds carry her, waves sustain her! She passes through the melodies of the Universe and is happy. I suppose we should all of us like to be thus conditioned, if conditioned we must be. My best love to Hazlemere!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*June 6, 1894.*

On Friday last died my dear old friend Henry Grattan White, Vicar of Kirk Maughold. We buried him yesterday at Ballaugh, where his sainted old father-in-law lies, my godfather, Mr. Howard.

How I shall miss poor White! The sweetest and most chivalrous of men. He was not brilliant, but

<sup>1</sup> Her music.

the most stainless and perfect gentleman I think I ever knew; so good too, so kind. He came to the island just forty years ago, so that I have known him for that period. He was of a good Irish family, an Irishman of the most exquisitely delicate type, conserved in a Manx elixir the daintiest and the most finely constituted. I do feel very sad.

About Clifton and my attitude towards it—it shifts coquettishly from time to time, but the direction is polar and ultimately inevitable.

In extreme old age I may enter Clifton *omnino ignotus*, there to dree my ain dole unstinted. Unless indeed I become incapable even of dole, for that is quite on the cards, and that would be the horror of horrors—sans griefs, sans joys, sans heart, sans anything.

The fear of putting this to the touch will keep me from Clifton, I suppose, indefinitely. It is one thing to poetize on the 'three places only, Dakyns'; it is another to encounter three voids and stagger away sodden with dullness or reeling with disappointment.

One bathe! a good one, but coldish; and I am going to have one to-day. June is a *fausse faitour*, and I really don't know which month to trust.

I didn't do much at Lichfield. The cathedral, though, is glorious. Being in a 'churchy' frame, I was quite content with the emotion, and, of set purpose, turned my back on Samuel, LL.D. There are people who would unscrew the tension of any cultus; what can you do? Why, obviously, change the venue, and talk of Pusey or Keble.

How about N.? that sweet, good, *intemperate*

creature? We know nothing yet as we ought to know. Some day perhaps we shall get to know how she fared in the tents of this dreadful Kedar, how from the shadow of that grim eclipse she passed 'in maiden meditation fancy-free.'

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 15, 1894.

You can't think with what interest I have been reading—good gracious, you'll never—well, guess then! No? I'll tell you. Law's *Treatise on Christian Perfection!!!* You know what a book it was with the men of eighty years ago. But I had no idea of its merits. Written about the beginning of the eighteenth century by a *Jacobite Nonconformist*, its doctrine is what I suppose would now be called high-flown. But the style is excellent, the logic tenacious, the wit never-failing. Of logic there is almost a *βαρυστία*, even to mood and figure. It is refreshing to feel oneself for a moment in the grip of such an athlete. But I will not affect to be indifferent to the subject-matter. I think it does me good.

Perhaps I might have chosen a more suitable alternative for this admirable theologian than *Anna Karénina* (second reading); but that book grows upon me; truly a very noble romance.

I have also been reading Karl Elze's *Essays on Shakespeare*. He is not bad, but don't you resent the imperturbable confidence of men, who after attributing a play of Shakespeare's to two authors, proceed to

suggest a third, urged thereto by some fatuous and self-sought exigency?

Last night two men presented themselves with a request. It was that I would take part in an undertaking which they call 'The Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.' How is one to escape these faddists? The world is overrun with them. Surely I might have relied on escaping them here. Yet I believe that the discoverer of the North Pole will come upon one of the lot addressing his rubbish to Ursa Major, placarding latitude 90 with a manifesto, blowing his trumpet in the ear of Arcturus, grating his scrannel pipe—but there! I promised the worthies to consult my brother clerics, and found myself at last talking about 'professional etiquette,' an expression which seemed rather to go home, but how exactly I would not like to say.

In return for your epigram, may I offer you one of my Manx songs?

I once did love a pretty gel,  
Her name was handsome Ballaw;  
It's lek enough you knew her well,  
She lived at Ballasallaw.

There most o' nights at Mother Cowle's  
I sat and got quite mallaw;  
And with a score of cheerful sows  
Rejoiced at Ballasallaw.

But though I quaffed the foamin quart  
Gintale there in the pallaw<sup>1</sup>,  
She wouldn't be my own sweet heart,  
This gel at Ballasallaw.

<sup>1</sup> i. e. parlour.

Alas, the gel a notion tuk,  
She loved another fallaw;  
And I was down upon my luck,  
Down, down at Ballasallaw.

The tastiest I allis dressed  
The more that I did swallow;  
Which univarsal was confessed  
By them at Ballasallaw.

Above her head I used to spread  
My fine silk romberallaw;  
She couldn't see the s'perier,  
This gel of Ballasallaw.

Whate'er I done with freak and fun,  
She married Jimmy Callaw;  
Unpozzible I think it still,  
This gel of Ballasallaw.

So with this grief which fortune gives  
I'm turning green and yallaw.  
I'm dying now; but still she lives,  
She lives at Ballasallaw.

There now! Turn that into Latin elegiacs!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

*June 18, 1894.*

Has the Commem. been and done itself? Any fireworks? chicken-fixins, or common doings? pomposities? rapier-thrusts? tears? frivolities? *θίασος* *εὐπεπλος*, plausible? Pulpit how occupied? Chairman of banquet? who was pleased? who was offended?

ices? decorations? Grins gathered on the floor next morning? Heart-burnings carried off for private rumination? sweetness, long drawn out, inadequate, weary? *κνίση ἐλισσομένη ἰδρῶτι, κνίση ὄχλου* voluminous, superflottant, *δύσπνοος*, infernal? 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'God save the Queen,' followed by a *sauve-qui-peut*, and a blessed and long craved for retreat to whisky and miscellaneous 'cussin'.'

Nay, don't follow him to his lair, that wretched man who made a speech at the dinner! I know, I know, God knows, *he* knows he made an awful mess of it. Respect the fallen! He will be miserable for the remainder of the term. No foolish jesting, please, no charivari at the door of his rooms! He couldn't help it. You hear him groan. Come away!

Have you been reading *Trilby*? It is a great improvement upon *Peter Ibbetson*. Rather a flout in the face of obvious proprieties—perhaps, too, rather excessively saturated with Thackeray; but certainly both amusing and interesting.

I shall soon, I think, blunder off into one of my stories. The style had better remain in my own hands, i.e. be really guided and deliberately controlled by me, not imposed by accident. The *common English* just now seems to hold the preference. That, practically, means Blank Verse. I wonder whether you ever read a thing called 'Bella Gorry' by me, and, if so, whether you inferred from it anything as regards my aptness for Blank Verse. I am not at all above taking great pains with a study in this kind, if you encourage me.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 24, 1894.

A thousand thanks for the Welsh story. *That* is the choicest morsel, as you say. 'We have not interfere with you, don't we? Yes. By Tam, No!' Delicious! Did you ever hear of Colley Cibber's play—*Love's Last Shift*? Do you know that a Frenchman, who translated it, gave the title as *La dernière chemise de l'Amour*? Isn't that Frenchy *in excelsis*?

We sailed round the island the other day. It was magnificent. The new governor was on board, beating the bounds of his island domain. So the captain took us very close. We were a party of eleven. The people were quite nice and orderly. I couldn't help thinking of my Windermere story—'By —— I tuk the lot.' That is just what I did, and was blessed in the deed. Such brilliancy of colour! But not far off: we barely saw Scotland, and England not at all, nor Ireland. The little nest of rocks and gorse had shut itself up to itself, and invited the sun to shine full upon its virgin breast. 'Susannah and the Elders,' thought I.

Have you any 'views' about the *Phoenissae*? Why did Euripides have a chorus of Phoenician, and not Theban women? Is it possible that he had in stock, or recently bought as a cheap lot, a set of dresses which he wanted to use? This urgency of the *costumier* might explain other things. Had he got hold, too, of a Phoenician piper? Phoenician



music? (quasi-Jewish!!). He harps a good deal on the *βοὰ βάρβαρος* of these she-males; but, otherwise, makes them chant good Greek enough.

TO D. RINTOUL.

RAMSEY,

June 25, 1894.

It makes me quite happy to think that you are still at Clifton. Your leaving would have been such a dislocation.

Irwin must be hugely relieved. He is not a man from whom you can part easily. There is an inveteracy of concretion in him that cries like the lacerated limbs of Polydore.

I suppose you, too, are easier in your mind. Youth is sanguine, and has a right to be sanguine. I have just got into my new house. This will most likely be my last change. Therefore, I am arranging my books with some care. We have a bit of garden which my son Birkett has in charge. To find cabbages and carrots at one's elbow is a pleasant sensation. It makes me feel quite a *propriétaire*. All Ramsey is witness of our horticultural *tentamina*; critical too, I can tell you. And we need support and indulgence, for my gardening dates very far back, and Birkett's is ruefully recent.

TO MRS. SHENSTONE.

July 15, 1894.

Ramsey life—Manx life—has its dissipations. Oh yes! downright dissipations, and no mistake. For

instance, yesterday we had a party of Americans brought over from Peel. We gave them tea and strawberries in the garden. They told me, with a delicious accent, that my daughters were 'quite lovely,' and my tea 'like a story-book.' Meantime Q. had entrenched himself in my study, resolved to make me his own for a final long solid reading of his MS. novel. How I contrived to dovetail the parson with these extremely feather-headed cousins from the other side of the Atlantic, by what specious shifts I got them to accept him as a fellow man of like 'body, parts, and passions' with themselves, how he could hardly conceal his discontent, how the young man of the American faction fairly took my breath away by the cheerful declaration that Q. was a wag, how Q. survived these trifles, how we retreated to the study and there had it out over pipes innumerable, how he had to snatch up his *cahiers* and bolt for the last train, how I waited lest he should return trainless, how the sweet twilight sponged my soul of this imminent distress—are not these things written in the Chronicles of the House of Brown, and in the prophecy of Birkett the seer?

And lo! it is morning! a glorious breezy day, bay blue as indigo, tipped with white feathers, perfect. Dora has gone, that is the worst of it. I cannot tell you how I miss her. She is such a joy and consolation. On Thursday she and Ethel played me the *Septuor*. It was, indeed, a sacrament, a high mass; only it is almost too beautiful: at times the loveliness becomes quite intolerable, and you feel you must rush out into the open, or grovel before your own children. . . .

There is the merest chance of my coming to Devonport to the Worthingtons, and, if so, to you in Cornwall. But these operations are, probably, too heroic. Bless you both.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*July 16, 1894.*

Your letter was a great delight compounded of many pleasant things, and spiced with a flavour of refreshing. That's a funny way to begin a reply which is all too late.

W. was charmed with our little island, which indeed did its very best. He cried aloud and rejoiced greatly. Occasionally he dipped into the Tartarus of turbid speculation, but I had him out in a moment, and on we went light-hearted, feather-brained, and happy. One day we did some twenty-two miles along the coast. He sketched, I smoked, nothing went amiss, the heavens were consentient, and Zeus on Barrule slumbered in purple dreams by the side of the golden-throned. They stayed ten days: I shall long to have them again.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

BAYREUTH,

*August 7, 1894.*

I am in the land of the great enchanter, or the great impostor—which? A good deal of both. The fact is, I knew well what was before me, disenchant-

ment I will not call it, for I never was under the utterly irrational spell to which some submit, nor capable, I trust, of the miserable following of fashions which leads others into untold extravagance. I will trouble you no more, however, about Wagner. This is the inscription over the door of his house here :—

*Wahnfried.*

Hier wo mein Wännen Frieden fand  
Sei dieses Haus von mir genannt.

Let this house be called the Peace-of-dreams,  
For here my dreams found peace.

If ever a man was *wahnsinnig*, he was, and obstinate, and confident, and intolerant. But verily a great musician.

Here, too, lies Liszt. The great pianist lies in the churchyard, but the son-in-law is buried in his own garden. To you a more interesting fact will be that also in the churchyard lies the great humourist, Jean Paul Richter. That's rather more in your line; perhaps rather more in mine too, if the truth must be known.

Here is an old Vier-und-Sechziger hovering vaguely over these Bavarian fields, and precious little the worse for it, upon my word, rather the better. Often as happy as bird on bough; but when I think of poor W. and such-like haps, my God! how my heart sinks!

But *sursum! sursum!* It's not such a dead-lift after all. There's 'a dale of happiness about'; put out your hand, and make a snatch at it, not furtively, or diffidently, but with full purpose.

The children here go barefoot. That has cheered me considerably, and women *of all ages*, but, of

course, of the lowest class, do the same. That is bad. What is to be done?

‘Measure them for shoes!’ That was pretty nearly what Mr. Dick said in presence of David’s sparse wardrobe.

No one speaks English here but the English. It is a thoroughly German place. I knew some ‘Amerkins,’ who were very pleasant, most unaffected and wholesome; but they have just gone away, leaving me *very* (pronounce that like the Latin for spring followed by *ee*) lonely.

To-day I was complimented on my German by an old German lady. But I believe she was French. She said I spoke it much better than she did English. *Das kann sein.*

### TO MISS D. BROWN.

AUF DER BURG, ISELTWALD, CANT. BERN, SCHWEIZ,

August 17, 1894.

Wonderful are the joys of the House Oakeley. The whole thing is quite perfect. Imagine what it must be to live in an absolutely Swiss family. I have always so longed to be admitted into the interior of genuine Swiss life. And now I have it, for the English nationality of my friends is but an accident.

I get a thundering big cup of tea in my bed at 8. Then comes breakfast in a gallery overlooking the lake. But I should tell you that we first have a summons to prayer, given by E. M. O. on the piano. It is a chorale! Children and servants they assemble in orthodox fashion in the dining-room, but we do

not breakfast in that room, but in our first floor gallery. Plenty of honey and wild raspberries. Lunch at 1.30, very nearly English. Afternoon tea at 5; dinner at 7.45. Interspersed among these substantial delights are Bachs, Beethovens, Schumanns, Chopins, Griegs, innumerable. They never stop. Sometimes a young Englishwoman, or French, or German, comes in and reinforces the music.

Yesterday who do you think was our reinforcement? Dakyns and Frances. They came down from Meiringen, wet though it was, and spent the evening... The meeting was tremendous!! Rain here is bad enough; but, writing in this open gallery, I catch lovely glimpses of wandering lights as sweet and peaceful as may be, hiding away among the pines.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

HIGHER COOMBE, HASLEMERE,

August 23, 1894.

I left the Dakynses in Switzerland; they were on their way home, and were detained at Meiringen by Arthur's being bad again.

The house is placed at my disposal, and it is quite heavenly—such perfect peace after all the chatter. So I think I will do what my hosts ask of me—stay here till they come. It is a glorious opportunity for thorough rest. I have begun by taking *seisin* of the piano, not the small one, but that on which Frances practises, and which is in the study. And a great mist has arisen, and at this height I am cut off from all the earth, being on Olympus for the nonce. The heavens

are padded into a mighty dullness, and there is no sound whatever—nothing visible, nothing audible, how perfect!

My time at Auf-der-Burg was most delicious. The hostess is most courteous and kind. We had a party of French-Swiss people who were very nice, one of them playing with much brilliancy, and our hostess 'made all the expenses of the conversation,' and entertained these honest folk as none of us could have done.

Much of my stay was devoted to Bach, O. and I hammering our duets as we used to do twenty-eight years ago, and with the fullest consciousness of that use. Surely this was soothing, not to say reassuring, I mean to us at least, to ourselves two.

PS.—Your picture of Margaret is a veritable gem. Save for the *grace*, Margaret is I——, that love of the 'driving rain,' that is the touch! Bless the child!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

HIGHER COOMBE, HASLEMERE,

August 24, 1894.

Will you meet me in Liverpool and cross with me? That would be grand.

I have been four days in town, but it was not enough. I only managed some four friends. No, it was three friends, and they belonged to three different periods of my life. The Isle of Man mastership, the Gloucester episode, the Clifton dream. First, the drawing-master at King William's; second, Henley (germinally); third, Heymann. All were kindness itself.

I wrote to Crossley from Bayreuth: I hope he agrees with me; or have I blasphemed a deity of his?

Marvellous joys and no 'common doin's' at Oakeley's. The place and the life are alike unique. Didn't we 'Bach' it to our hearts' content? Our hostess covered herself with honour. You should have seen her entertain a party of French-speaking people at afternoon tea. We others (*nous autres*, P——<sup>1</sup>) sat as dumb as dish-covers, while the Châtelaine of Auf-der-Burg made conversation for all.

The Dakynses were detained by Arthur's falling ill. I ran down here yesterday, not however to the life and conversation of H. G. D., but to a *solitudo*. It is a delicious solitude, and I am very willing to abide it, and 'occupy till' they come. Such are their prayers and admonitions. I walked up Blackdown yesterday evening. Oh the heather! oh the silence! Many thoughts came into my mind, whether 'voluble'—— some day may tell, probably not. But they were sweet and tender, and—— I suppose they were not really thoughts, they lay too deep for predication and the categories.

You dreadful man! This would have gone straight to you, if I could only read the address. And I ought to put c/o. Now I don't know Watt's initials. Would you reduce me to the humiliation of writing c/o Watt, Esq.? Irwin! Irwin! have mercy! I send this to the Clifton ark. 'Go, little dove.'

<sup>1</sup> The italics represent a preference for the French language on the part of P——.



TO H. G. DAKYNS.

HIGHER COOMBE, HASLEMERE,

August 25, 1894.

I am so sorry. . . . I fear you are in great trouble and perplexity.

I got to London last Sunday and stayed there till Thursday. Then I came on here.

My disappointment was great. But the quiet was delicious. I walked out over Blackdown. I never saw such heather, and the bleaberries must have been magnificent—they are over. Yesterday morning was so hot that I could hardly stir. I got to the Station and bought a paper. Then, after lunch, I had a talk with Ragless, who thinks it a bad year for flowers, especially roses. The rats bother him, and there is a difficulty about setting traps on account of Roy. But Roy never goes into the garden. What a glorious creature! At first he was all fire and fury, but soon recognized a potential friend. He spends most of his time in a gentle sort of captivity at the front door. When I appear he lies on his back, and then suddenly rolls over and grips a great marrow-bone. I don't see much of the pigeons, though one of that hooded kind (Capuchins?) peeped in at the dining-room window, and retired as who should say—'Only that old buffer!' About 4 p.m. rain began, and it has rained ever since (10 a.m.).

I have seen a rum book called *La Vie inconnue de J. C.*: I believe it to be a sell. Also I have read some of Boethius' *De Cons.* in a lovely little copy presented to you by S. T. I. I rather need

this *Consolatio*. But I will not add my doubts and uncertainties to yours. So I state it to myself peremptorily that I am going to wait here till next Friday (!) in the hope of your all turning up. Henry is coming to-day. That will be very nice. I have never had such an opportunity of getting close to him before. *Quod faustum!*

Beside Boethius, however, I have many, I will not say consolations, but attractions. Certain *scones*, a certain *blackberry-jelly*. It 'crisps me the nerves,' when I think of them. Mary is perfect to me, and so indeed are all. I go to bed at 10, am called at 7.30; bathe in your big bath; returning to dress in bedroom, discover a grand cup of tea; breakfast at 8.30, lunch 1.30, tea complete at 4.30, dinner at 7.30, biscuit and whisky at 9.30. Was ever such a Sybarite?

In London I saw Heymann and Henley. The latter lives now at Barnes, in a delightful old house by the river-side. We had a most affectionate meeting; had not seen each other for thirty-two years. . . .

How pleasantly the birches smell in your Avenue! Sid. Irwin will, I hope, meet me in Liverpool next Friday, and we shall cross to the Island on Saturday. The Gods send you hither long before that, and Arthur quite well, or at least *incolumis!*

Fancy my having a compartment to myself a good twelve hours (Berne to Chalons) the other night! It shows which way the tide of travel is still setting. . . .

We had the little *Foam*. What a thing! Just a bit of a swell, and lots of people sick. She did it in about one and three-quarter hours. We met a fine big boat which made nothing of the sea. Is she the

*Victoria*? I really think the *Foam* is a disgraceful anachronism. Kindest love to you all. Are the Miss Piries 'with'? Roy sends earnest longings.

TO MISS E. BROWN.

HIGHER COOMBE, HASLEMERE,

August 27, 1894.

On Saturday arrived Henry, and immediately his arrival brought fruit. . . . At 3 p.m. this young man, with a fine, simple audacity, took me off to Aldworth. We had tea with Lord and Lady Tennyson. There is a simplicity, a sweetness, and a good sense about this man that makes you love him at once. And they showed me the place and all its sacred belongings with such graceful candour. They seemed to know that I must wish to see things, and there was no coyness or affectation of reluctance; in short, they anticipated me at every turn. For instance, he showed me the old poet's favourite seat, and summer-house, in the latter the last pen he used, and his old plain metal ink-stand, like those we had in our hall for Prep.<sup>1</sup> The trippers, he said, had so far spared these relics, but he could not undertake to say how much further their forbearance was likely to extend. Still *there* they should remain as far as he was concerned. Lady T. took me up to her room on the third floor, from which you can get a distant peep of the sea, and a most glorious view of the Weald. The house stands on a hill, a sort of promontory of the Downs. The day was perfection; all round the domain the crimson

<sup>1</sup> School 'Preparation' of evening work.

heather rolls right up to the enclosure, and mingles with the woods. I positively have to knock under about our Manx ling. This Surrey stuff, consisting of crimson bell, cat heather, and ling, is the finest I have ever seen anywhere. The woods are, of course, not to be paralleled in the Isle of Man; they are quite tumultuous, and remain as green as in June. There is not the smallest appearance of decay; it looks like midsummer. But the rich golden grain reminds us that autumn is 'dominant.'

The Dakynses we expect this evening. This will be all right. For, even with H. at home, I cannot help feeling rather an intruder with a touch of the parasite! . . .

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

September 28, 1894.

Fowler<sup>1</sup> has departed this morning with a 'fresh wind and a flowing sheet,' and has been delighted and delightful. There was no drawback—weather exquisite, and everything going off like a reel. He is a profound admirer of *The Manxman*, and is going to buy all the novels.

Yesterday we were at Port Iern. We walked to Fleshwick in sunlight of the brightest. Our first evening at Port Iern gave us the Mourne Mountains in a *deliquium* of melancholy splendour which exceeded even your vision of 'the Guarded Mount' from Peel Hill. Long after sunset the black outline

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Fowler, D.D., President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

cut across a band of deepest purple. By Jove! it was a tremendous revelation, and the *vela* almost terrible in their significance. We proceeded to Castletown and the College. We saw every room, every dormitory, every dustbin, and Fowler was perfectly happy.

TO THE REV. J. BAKER.

RAMSEY, ISLE OF MAN,

September 29, 1894.

I return the 'Waterloo' letters, for the perusal of which I am most grateful.

How wonderfully they call up the atmosphere of the time! *Documents* are so invaluable: no history, however brilliant, can produce an equal impression.

Irwin has been over here, and we had a most delightful time. The weather was good, and we got about a good deal. I think he begins to like our little island, and indeed it was on its best behaviour.

His *Lucian* is extremely entertaining. And all this he has wrestled for with sundry 'beasts at Ephesus.' It is extraordinary how he can contrive to find time, and the necessary go and fervour.

TO MRS. SHENSTONE.

October 21, 1894.

I see your face framed in the window of the little Manx Railway carriage, as I saw it that last morning, and the possession is permanent. Yet I have not written. Well, not writing doesn't mean not thinking, rather the reverse. . . .

Hall Caine! I agree with everything you say about this marvellous book. Only imagine—as Manx—even so it comes up to my utmost demands, sweeps me off my Manx feet, *charrane-less*<sup>1</sup>, naked, bleeding with the gorse-pricks. And then you are a witness of its depth, its reach, its grip, its electric energy, its universal truth. Be sure it is a genuine as it is a profound fascination that the book exercises. You have taken it to your heart; let it lie there, a sovereign specific for all ills, an amulet of peace and purity. The people here, and I dare say at Clifton, talk of its ‘coarseness.’ By the people I mean, of course, the *genteel* class. *The* people, the warm-hearted, humorous, loving Manx folk, glory in it. The darling old savages! Don’t you see them looking into the mirror? Just as the South Sea beauties stared deliciously into Captain Cook’s glass, and showed all their pearly teeth, and nudged one another. These are my people, savages if you will, I don’t mind—noble, unconscious, sympathetic, naked and not ashamed. Yes, they love the book, and greedily devour it. My genteel friends however draw their skirts out of the path. ‘Faugh! disgraceful! coarse!’ As one of them said the other day, ‘Mr. Hall Caine seems to have a little bit of genius—yes, I dare say, but that is all.’ ALL! Did you ever?

Upon the subject of coarseness I preach incessantly to these owls. It is just the point for them. Some of them seem rather ashamed. The reason is so obvious that I have to spare them. ‘*Your* passion then is coarseness; passion is coarseness; coarseness

<sup>1</sup> Shoc-less? (a conjecture).

is passion; they are the same thing. Therefore Kate's passion is coarse.' But Kate's passion is a flame of purity and splendour. They don't see that because their own passion, if it at all exists, is—what? Ah, poor souls! It is something that they have to stifle, to beat down like the prairie fire, to be ashamed of, to be silent about, instead of the joy and glory of their life. Do these beings live?

Meanwhile Hall Caine is the High Priest of this altar. He is misunderstood of course. He has just heard of a young man in America who has died by his own hand. By his side was found a copy of *The Manxman*, marked in many places, and intended to be seen by the wife of a friend. For he cherished an unhallowed passion for her. This is precisely one of those unhappy Wertherian accidents that dog the steps of all great things. And he is very wretched about it. . . .

'Caesar Cregeen' is the triumph. Who ever guessed before that such treasures of humour lay hidden within the breast of Hall Caine? The Isle of Man seems to have elicited them. Literature is permanently enriched by this creation. A great *tour de force* is the recovery (rehabilitation) of Philip. I myself feared that he had brought Philip too low. But he ends magnificently, with a pathos that is astounding. We find that, all the time, we have loved this Philip.

Pete is a dangerous character for a novelist. The danger consists in the inevitable *spooning*. He is too sweet, a luscious moral jelly, which palls upon the taste and disorders the digestion. I hear Wilson Barrett

has more than fallen into the snare, in fact has gormandized on the facile diet, and will soon, if he persists, nauseate his audience. Already he has done so at Manchester. The play was damned there from the first. Our hardy Norsemen are better critics than your pock-pudding Southerners. They are right. The play can never succeed legitimately until it has been restored to its true balance. Even in the novel, Pete weighs it down to a lob-sided attitude, which is excessive and contrary to all rules of true art. Said a Peel lady tersely, 'Pete is a fool.' A hard-mouthed quean this lady of Peel, but perilously near being right. Now don't be angry with her, or with me! Before long you'll come round to my opinion, if not to hers.

I had begun to wear my beard, and it was dreadful. So it had to come off. This is very perplexing. The question is where to find the interval, the Jericho for its culture. If I take the wings of the morning, if I . . . what is to be done? A retreat, clerical or otherwise? Is this the secret of 'spiritual' retreats? Men want to change their capillary habit (by which you will please not understand me to mean 'a hair-shirt'), and so betake themselves to the cells. Perhaps so; but laymen can't do this, and S. of Clifton College is an example of the heroic hardihood with which a man may effect the transition publicly and without misgiving. The 'hero as shaveling' or the 'hero as goat.'

Kindest regards to Mr. Shenstone. Love from all.



TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 28, 1894.

A thousand thanks for your story. One gets a brilliant glimpse of some not over-brilliant people.

I have written a Hall-Caine-Manxman article for the *Contemporary*, which might interest you as a Manx neophyte of so much promise!

Y. was here the other day—a sharp, shrewd, serious sort of person, unnecessarily serious, shrewd, sharp, but good in his way. I have said ‘unnecessarily,’ but perhaps, after all, it was necessary in the economy of things. A literary man, he is advisedly pedestrian. He does not dream of guiding the public, elevating the public, or anything but following the *crassa multitudo*. He does not love that entity, but he will wait upon it, study it. As the eyes of a maiden are lifted to the hand of her mistress, so do his eyes wait upon—the public.

His candour about this is refreshing, perhaps, but rather startling. ‘The public doesn’t care a *brass farthing* for so-and-so.’ The ‘so-and-so’ includes such ‘illigant trifles’ as poetry, essays, literary sketches, reviews of books, everything not *absolutely* up-to-date, or, we had better say, ‘to-data.’

Z. has missed fire with Macmillan. I suspect we shall all miss fire now. ‘The ground is covered,’ as Y. said with reference to *The Manxman* and all possible competitors, or humble coexistents, not coefficients. But behold, I am gliding into mathematics—‘gude guide us a’!’

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 1, 1894.

‘Oft in the stilly night.’

ll. 5 and 6, ‘the smiles, the tears,’ &c. ‘*Illacrimo pueri lacrimis puerilior*’ is a distinct inspiration, just that *heightening* of the phrase (tender and loveable) which is so amply justified by the effect. *Euge!*

The question is whether this rain will ever cease. I hear it swilsh, swilsh, all day, and in ‘the stilly night’ it is *bourdon* to my dreams. It prevents my going to see an old friend; indeed, it keeps me to the house, and here I am a close prisoner. The very bay seems swept out of existence, and Barrule is a barely conjecturable bugaboo. We must return to whist. It began last night. There, sir, are the little events of our daily record, while Salisbury and Rosebery gird at one another, and the Czar is moribund at Livadia. Where is Livadia? I prayed for him last night.

Hans Sachs—I took him up yesterday, and read Gödeke’s introduction, and one or two of the *Lieder*. They were of the sacred kind (except the first), and not attractive. The Meistersingers, as theologians, were fatuous enough, i.e. in verse. Hans Sachs’ prose is said to have been a powerful solvent in the Reformation muddle.

To Addison I give my ‘nights and days’—how delicious he is! Do you know his use of the word

'indolent' = 'without pain'? I imagine it is his only use. One of his mottoes I tried the other day with a dear old friend whom I visited in his illness. He is upwards of 80, and is very unhappy. He clings to life, and seems to consider it a grievance that it was so delightful—and now, all gone. He was the very soul of hospitality, lived heartily and liberally among his fellows, liked 'to have his friends about him.' I tried to lead him back to those bygone days, and get him to extract from them the solace which I think they are well suited to afford. I was one of the *turba coenantum*, though still revocable to his querulous old vows. And I quoted Martial:—

Hoc est

Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui.

Lovely, is it not? But the dear old thing could only go back to the *lacunae*. Shall we come to that? I don't know. I have a very strong impression that I shall not.

I have been reading *Job*—not *mine*<sup>1</sup>, but Froude's. It is very noble. 'What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' But Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, reinforced by Brown the sophist and Elihu the cantankerous, could have availed nothing against this deep-seated melancholy.

Remember me most kindly to the 'saints that are of your household.'

<sup>1</sup> This poem he had refused me earlier in the letter. 'Even your neophytic promise is hardly capable of it.' 'It is strongly Manx.'

TO A. W. MOORE<sup>1</sup>.

November 6, 1894.

I seek no preferment anywhere, certainly not in the Isle of Man. At some cost I have purchased my freedom, and will not lightly part with it. It is a case of 'From Egypt's bondage come.' A few years will finish the business, and I must be free—free to do what I like, say what I like, write what I like, within the limitations prescribed by me by my own sense of what is seemly and fitting. Literature is my calling, and that in the most liberal interpretation, ranging from *Die hohe Kritik* to such lucubrations as 'The Gel of Ballasallaw.' With this view, I need absolute freedom, freedom to go to church or not to go to church, freedom to commune with local preachers and occasionally attend methodist chapels, freedom to smoke a pipe in a Manx public-house, freedom to absent myself from church conferences and ruri-decanal potterings—in short, *absolute* freedom. If from this freedom there should proceed anything whereby my native island may profit, either by way of self-realization or harmless mirth, *apponam lucro*. To hold up the mirror to my fellow-countrymen comes natural to me; and in the more open field of invention I am not without hope of giving them pleasure. Every man should follow the bent of his nature in art and letters, always provided that he does not offend against the rules of morality and good taste. But an archdeacon must submit to other

<sup>1</sup> Two letters on the question of whether or not he would accept the Archdeaconry of Man.

and more cramping restraints. Good taste alone would cancel half my writings as the production of an ecclesiastical dignitary. The great Archdeacon of Oxford is no model for a divine of the nineteenth century. The blessed old Walter was perhaps not looked upon too favourably in the twelfth when he wrote his *Meum est propositum*, and though *meum propositum* is not *in taberna mori*, yet I should glory in writing a 'drinking-song' like his.

You see I am incorrigible!

Hugh Gill stands foremost among the native clergy, and would, in every way, make an excellent holder of the office.

TO A. W. MOORE.

November 14, 1894.

. . . I would work hard to get it for a Manxman, what's the use? Our countrymen have no chance. As livings go now in England, Andreas is very valuable, and the foreigners are indiscriminately ravenous. They will bite at anything, much more than at Andreas. *I bite not!*

This vision of gaiters and dancing attendance, and all the proprieties and all the pettinesses having passed, I feel quite *tuneful*<sup>1</sup>. And yet my legs have only just escaped the greaves ecclesiastic.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

November 21, 1894.

My *castis omnia casta* rests really on a great effort I made to subdue the physical repugnance I told you

<sup>1</sup> I omit verses (a eulogy of Archdeacon Gill) quoted elsewhere.

of. I had found so few people sympathize with me, or even understand me, that I began to suspect my own *διάθεσις*. Choking down, therefore, that rising gorge, I raised myself to a point which overlooks the objection. My whole being rushes out to apprehend the passion of love. Once dissipate that horror (of which I have perhaps said enough), and the field of expectation is even greedily devoured by me (*corripio campum*). The removal of that physical check makes me abound in the opposite sense. And, indeed, I see the whole situation as *chaste*, or rather soaring into an atmosphere which doesn't differentiate things in that way.

I read *Trilby* in *Harper* as it came out. It simply astonished me. Whole pages of it were delicious, the very *medulla* of the *sweeter* Thackeray. But one misses the bitter-sweet. Still it is much to give the Thackerayan honey alone; for *Trilby* is a veritable honeysuckle, if ever there was. As a *tour-de-force* I imagine nothing has been written for many years that comes near it. And weren't the pictures good? And after *Peter Ibbetson*, with both text and illustrations so disappointing. I see some reviews are calling upon Du Maurier to advance and challenge the higher issues. But surely that is unfair. He has done admirably, and I don't think he is ever likely to do better. His work is an extraordinarily felicitous product, an *acme*, I should call it, or high-water mark for him. Apparently it has been written with the greatest care. Isn't that the very condition of its excellence? Let him lash himself for some mighty effort, and ten-to-one we shall see a dismal failure.

Do you think at his time of life and all, there's much more to come of that brand? I don't.

I have been reading a little Latin—*Amphitruo* of Plautus (how bright and strenuous!), and *Epistles* of Horace. Has it ever struck you that there is some affectation of the desultory, loosely-connected, *non-sequitur*, Byronic slovenliness, or whatever we may call it, about these compositions? A *nescio quid* that suggests more than carelessness, something approaching to *ῥβρις*, even to cynicism, i.e. artistically.

Your Latin verses <sup>1</sup> I greatly enjoy. The dear old Abraham goes straight off into your beautiful lines. Of course he has not a scrap of modern *impedimenta*. You get through the Customs at the frontier with a whistle and a smile. You have *nothing to declare*. The blessed old man by your side is himself a Roman to begin with, and you pass together as cheerfully as possible.

*In re Rabelaisiana*. Big broad Rabelaisians may sit down with us in our more liberal hours, but Sterne never! I have an idea that my judgment within this area is infallible. There are nice Rabelaisians, and there are nasty; but the latter are not Rabelaisians.

The new *Macmillan* has a pious horror of my Anglo-Manx. So *Job* must keep till I have a *mixed* volume ready. By that time my BEARD will have grown, and I may leave Jericho. Remember this, if you want to grow a beard begin at once, or you will never have a rich, glossy, soft, voluminous, silken appendage. The longer you put it off, the coarser it will be when it comes. Hemp is a fool with it.

<sup>1</sup> Cowley.

Oakum-picking is substituted for shaving, one kind of penal labour for another, and there you are. But if ever you see me in the flesh again it will be with a beard.

I don't 'scorn' the Archdeaconry. The function is something more than archidiaconal. It is legislative, the Archdeacon of Man being *ex officio* a member of the Council. Moreover (and this is symptomatic), the Governor communicated to me through a friend, the fact that my appointment would be *very acceptable to him*, and that expressly with a view to my duly weighing the considerations bearing on the matter. This was, I think, very kind, but my mind is made up, and has been from the first.

A. M. is my great *fautor* in the business. Here is an epigram I wrote him :—

Archidiaconicam quaeris cur non sequar escam?  
Roystona<sup>1</sup> quot dentes sint mihi, Maure, roga.

*Anglice.*

You won't be Archdeacon? Such fads I'm irate with.  
Ask Royston what teeth I've to nibble a bait with.

Also I want a cousin of mine to get the Archdeaconry. Here is a manifesto by St. Andrew himself. The Rectory is Kirk Andreas.

'Gill for Archdeacon!' sound the fiat clear!  
A Manxman he, and Manx-like loves the Manx.  
A stranger's voice my people will not hear;  
Let them hear Gill's grand voice and give God thanks.

... The never-sufficiently-to-be-valued Worthington has sent me a lovely picture, one painted by himself, of Ramsey. He calls it, 'The Ramsey Sentinels,' i.e.

<sup>1</sup> 'Dentistam' celeberrimum Monensem. Roystona = 'Ποίστονα ab 'Ποίστων, cf. Μέμνονα ab Μέμνων.—T. E. B.



the two lighthouses, one on either side of the harbour-mouth. I have written an inscription for it.

PINXIT A. M. W., MDCCCXCIV.

Beyond that line the angry billows cease,  
Whilst light to conscious light the watchword tells;  
Without is war, within is guarded peace;  
And hence their name, 'The Ramsey Sentinels.'

Now I think that is pretty, and it owes all its prettiness to Worthington. Essentially, what a poet he is! But he doesn't write verse? Must I change my principles? I'll tell you what, I'm certain he does write verse; yes, rhymed verse! there now! *Stent principia!* Very kindest regards to you all; and mind you include your brother.

TO MISS E. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

November 25, 1894.

How deeply I sympathize with you in what you say about Clevedon! The dream condition which you describe I enter into with all my soul. The old life once lived and for ever passed from us! A brooding presence that haunts the air, and charges it with memories that are almost more vital than the obvious surroundings. The wallflower, the flow'ring currants, that will soon be there again, and, everywhere. . . . Yes, Clevedon sums up our life more even than Clifton. To creep into it quietly some morning, to drop down from Cadbury, and just breathe it again—how delightful it would be! And poor little M.—a few wild hyacinths to strew upon his grave. You have led me into this dream very sweetly and gently.

## TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

December 4, 1894.

Names are invaluable; they often suggest stories. Here is my basket! pour into it! What a lovely story that is about the poor widow! yours, or M.'s, or 'both's'? It is delicious. If we were to develop it, I fear the inroad of the 'sentimental.' So it must be told quite briefly and in verse, e. g.—

Her husband died before her babe was born

Two years ago. *Converted?* Doubt and grief,  
Poor soul! she felt. Her Methodist creed forlorn  
Gave but a lenten substance of relief.

To-day, beneath the piteous gaze of morn,  
Her child is dying. On his little brow  
Descends the veil, and all is over now—  
Not yet, not yet! For suddenly he springs  
As who perceived the gleam of golden wings.  
'Dada!' he cries; he knows his father's face,  
Ne'er seen before. O God, thou giv'st the grace!  
O widowed heart! They live in Heaven's fair  
light,

Your husband with his boy: the child was right.

There! Shall I dedicate it to you, or to M.? or slight as it is, will it bear dedication to the 'two of ye'?

Perhaps a more perfect day never shone on this sea-girt isle than this. What marvels December can work, when it's in the mood!

PS.—Send me stories to get them ‘set’ in the same way. There is nothing I like better than ‘setting’ these little jewels.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 11, 1894.

It seems a long time since I last heard from you. The matter of the Archdeaconry came to a head by Asquith’s offering it to me and my refusing. So that is all over.

I ought to tell you that I had a charming letter from Sir West Ridgeway about *il gran rifiuto*. He did not tax me with *viltade*, and that was very good of him.

And now I feel as light as air. No net henceforth is likely to be spread in the sight of this bird, and I can see my way on till the end.

Did I tell you of the three excellent articles in *Ste. Beuve’s Causeries* (vol. xi) on Cowper? I am sure you would like them. They are appreciative and sympathetic, and that is not amiss from a Frenchman. I have also read a *Causerie* on Virgil, and one on Theocritus. So many French *littérateurs* give me the idea that they don’t go nearer the Greek authors than the Latin translations.

Do you know Wordsworth’s Essay, prefixed, I think, to his collection of Lyrics—subject, the neglect of all great writers (Eng.) by their contemporaries? He makes out his point very well; but the object is manifest, and so naïvely put. He wants to prepare the world for his own book being a failure.

I have just read *The Excursion*. In book viii, I think, occurs the celebrated line—

Goes sounding on his dim and perilous way.

Surely I have read somewhere that that line was Coleridge's. Puzzled, I had recourse to Milton, but it was not there, however worthy of him. In *The Excursion* it is quite *in situ*, and there are no marks of quotation. Isn't this all terribly sciolistic? I ought to know these things, but I don't. By-the-bye, in reading *The Excursion* after a long interval, I feel so much how good it would have been for Wordsworth to have gone to Oxford. He is a thorough Cantab, has no philosophical vocabulary, and really rather bores one with his constant philosophizing, which is under difficulties and often only half intelligible. Some periods, all involved and crude of phrase, I can't construe.

Most wonderful, and why not delightful? In the parish of Maughold, commonly reported of as the last fortress of barbarism, they are going to have, on Thursday night, an entertainment which will include (saving your presence) the trial scene—In *Pickwick*? Nay, sir, no such 'commin doin's,' but *The Merchant of Venice*!!! Isn't that splendid. Fancy these rustics with some Holofernes of a school-master aspiring to such purposes! Not content even with a homely Pyramus and 'Thisne,' but the *absolute* soccus. God bless them! We intend going. To think that the music-hall is to give way, if only in this one item, to the 'true and the beautiful.' To see these country lads, open-mouthed, drinking in the sweet gravity of Portia. But how about Shylock?

If they laugh—ah! So much depends upon the actor. I have my fears. Well, if they *do* laugh, I shall be disappointed, but not disheartened. You shall know the result. The School House is quite up among the mountains. The full moon has a great deal to do with the matter. Now don't deride! you owe me two letters.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

December 15, 1894.

*Coraggio, mon ami!* You see, don't you, the end of the combat, and your fingers clutch less spasmodically the bowie-knives of assassination? I see you all, and have no fears. On the contrary, I am reading Gautier, and will preach to-morrow two excellent sermons. My poor friend Langton, the Vicar of Bride, is dead, and I am going to help his curate. What will you bet that I don't bring in the good Rector's descent from Bennet Langton, and further back from Stephen of that ilk? Will the rustics stare! All right! All the better!

The rustics at Maughold did not behave very well at the Shakspearian performance the other night. I gave them a sketch of the play up to the trial scene, but I forgot to tell them not to laugh at Shylock, and they did laugh the whole time. Poor souls! All acting is to them comical. The mere assumption of a part sets them off at once. It is the fault of *μίμησις* and can't be helped. The *fescennine* precedes everything, and is the primal fount of drama. On Tuesday I shall repeat my

preliminary remarks to an audience at Lezayre. I must tell them what a *ducat* is, and a Doctor of Law. Of course to my Maughold friends ducats were a kind of bird. 'These birds I must shift<sup>1</sup>:' and beg them to understand that Portia does not appear in the character of Sangrado. The only theatrical scene they had ever witnessed before is that performed at Christmas by the Whiteboys, or Mummers, and there a real phlebotomizing, dosing son of Aesculapius is a leading comic personage. So they took Portia for that kind of doctor, and audibly expressed their recognition of the identity, at the same time demanding the 'King George,' properly 'Saint George,' whom he is required to heal of 'his deadly waoond.'

'The quality of mercy is not strained' they of course applied to some defect in the making up of the prescription.

Sir, it is a day of small things, but we are not discouraged, not a bit of it.

N. is now preening his plumes already full sleek enough. Marvellous phantom, till Hades recovers him, and the plaintive shades mourn their lost peace. The effect upon Proserpine and the three-headed monster is doubtful. But that will be only at the entrance, and N. will be too tired to give them a taste of his quality first thing. Otherwise Cerberus might snap—poor N.! poor Cerby! Now, sir, stop this nonsense!

<sup>1</sup> Some piece of coterie-speech.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 21, 1894.

*Pembroke*<sup>1</sup> arrived and was 'hausted' at one sitting. Thank you very much. It was quite impossible to leave it once I began. It has its faults, but they are made up for by some delightful things.

It is difficult to understand the character and conduct of Barney. He seems almost a lunatic. Yet his brutal obstinacy gives occasion to some very fine scenes, notably to that with Rose in the plough-field. But how about the likeness between Barney and Richard Alger? Surely we have the most pregnant intimation of an occult cause for this; and ought the excited and expectant reader to be cheated so mercilessly? Then, do you care about the supposed physical degeneracy and even visible spinal distortion of Barney? I thought we had come to a Doctor Jekyll business. But no, all passes off, and we are again frustrate. These things are, I think, unsatisfactory *tentamina*, a sort of pullulation towards as yet untried ground! Do your spookery frankly, or leave it alone. It's no use making my flesh creep if you don't make my hair rise with the full-bloom horror. Besides, my flesh only begins to creep, and this inchoate condition is a bore. For goodness sake, let people keep their feet on the ground. They need not, therefore, necessarily be pedestrian.

The mysterious, unexplained, but strongly emphasized likeness of Barney to Alger would prepare

<sup>1</sup> Miss Mary Wilkins' novel.

one for a heredity out-cropping after the manner of Ibsen, or for some criminal *nexus*, I don't know what, as between the Thayers and the Algers. But all that it leads to is the very worst in the whole book—Aunt Sylvie's mistake, and unconscious betrayal (*repulsive* would not be too strong a word).

One situation, however, redeems everything. We have it on page 244—the death of Deborah, or, rather, Deborah stricken down. Only a few lines. ‘“I wish you'd go an' get Rebecca an' Barney, father,” said Deborah faintly. She suddenly wavered so that her old husband wavered with her, and they reeled back and forth like two old trees in a wind.’ Magnificent! That is nature herself, and at one of the ἀκμαί. See the simplicity of the means! and the stupendous effect! Why should a woman who can do this yield to the pseudo-scientific, or whatever it is?—the damnable incubus of the para-physical?

The epigram<sup>1</sup> (epitaph) by Marvell is one of the noblest things I ever saw. You have introduced me to a veritable treasure. How, and when did you find it? And R. did not know it either! *Treasure trove*, and no mistake! You'll have to surrender it to the Crown. But henceforth *Marvell's* crown will shine to me with added lustre. ‘Let him rest his reputation, &c. &c.’ A glorious diamond of tears!

A eulogy (brief but earnest) by Ste. Beuve on

<sup>1</sup> ‘An Epitaph upon —,’ Marvell's Works, *Muses' Library*, ed. Aitken, vol. i. p. 112. It begins:

‘Enough; and leave the rest to fame;  
'Tis to commend her, but to name.’



Mat. Arnold pleased me the other day. He also singles out the father as deserving of high commendation. He quotes (translates) the doctor. The passage is a fine one, an apology, and more than an apology for the classics, and is taken from what seems a lecture by Dr. Arnold (volume de *Mélanges du docteur Arnold*, seconde édition, Londres 1858, p. 250), vid. Ste. Beuve, *Nouveaux Lundis*, vii. pp. 1-52, on 'The Greek Anthology.' Ste. Beuve is an enthusiastic champion for our side, but, oddly enough, he never strikes me as knowing much about the matter!! Happy Christmas! merry, if you will.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 30, 1894.

What a coil! Hail, snow, 'wind and storm fulfilling,' &c. But here I have your nice verses, good fire, a pipe, and I can defy Boreas.

I don't think I should care to introduce a third rhyme into the octave. A shapely sonnet ought, I fancy, to pile up the octave as a stem, avoiding rhythmic changes; then the sestet should blossom out in rhyme like a rich corolla. I prefer the excess of rhyme in the flower part of your plant. Your sonnet follows the reverse method. Otherwise I like it very much.

In the form, I advocate restraint, chastity, conformity to the purest Italian models. It is a plant of Italian growth, and we Englishmen, so naturally disposed to be irregular, had best hold ourselves in.

It is a question, essentially, and in every sense, of *measure*. Let us be *measured*, especially within so small a plot of ground as the Sonnet. Elsewhere we can and do pan out enormously—plenty of verge and compensation.

Warton's lines I think are poor things, hardly worth translating; I prefer yours to the original.

It is quite allowable to foam over in a crest of heightened idea, when the original attains a certain elevation. You are excited, and justifiably so; hence the added swell, or stronger heave. But the original must give an ἀφορμή. As a translator you have no right to 'take the word of God out of the minister's mouth' and make him speak poetry, where he has himself been contented with prose. This is artistically an impertinence, possibly, even from a moral point of view (a very delicate one, I admit), *the taking of a liberty!!!*

About *The Manxman*, this is the point.

The 'loves' of Philip and Kate (taking no account of matrimony, and therefore in the sphere of naked idyll, *pagan* idyll, if you like) are most glorious. I go with them to the very apogee—you will not call it perigee—of their rapture. Surely a splendid love-fling, genuine and sweet. That is Part I.

For this I have in *Tess* a sordid, melancholy—situation!!

The Manxman, clouded, eclipsed for a while, but, by some potent charm, brought out into the light of clear victory and triumph. That is Part II.

For this in *Tess*, marriage of Tess and return to the unutterable Chadband-satyr who ruined her. This

is sheer *πορρεία* of the most loathsome, cold-blooded type. She also commits murder. That does not much mend matters. ∴ I prefer *infinitely*, *The Manxman*.

TO E. RYDINGS.

January 19, 1895.

Your story is delightful. The Manx (Anglo-Manx) is rich and profound, and, I should say, faultless.

You live in a fine Manx district, and derive full advantage from the fact.

I have an idea that Mr. M.'s new book will show plainly that we have arrived at the last squeak of the Manx language proper. So I think what we have now to do is to make a *new start*, making Anglo-Manx dialect the basis. In its turn this will probably become obsolete, but meanwhile the catastrophe will be deferred by your stories, and, perhaps I may add, mine.

Let us then make all we write very good and sound—Manx timber, Manx calking, Manx bolting, Manx everything. Manifestly we shall not appeal to strangers, nor in fact, hope to make a penny by them. Neither will the Manx public defray the expense of pen-and-ink and paper.

You are wonderfully strong for this purpose. Never hesitate to put in an expression or phrase which you know to be in use, or to have been in use within your memory.

We must make a long arm, and stretch back and grip the receding past. Don't care a scrap whether

we thereby run the risk of being unintelligible to the rising generation. That is of no consequence. You and I are a Court of Record; let us execute our office faithfully and lovingly. . . . In short, we must be both daring and modest. . . . In all this, there is no *money*—of that I am sure. But there is the joy of self-utterance, of sympathy elicited, of vital union with a people whom we love, and who deserve our love, of a precious future treasury, the old possessions of the race, wondering, perhaps, how they should have come to lose so much, thankful for what will have been saved from the shipwreck. . . .

TO S. T. IRWIN.

*January 29, 1895.*

I contrived to get to a 'Burns' dinner in Douglas on the 21st, and to propose the toast of 'The Immortal Memory.' I fully expected to be 'kilt,' but I got on very well. The audience was a capital one—such stalwart, enthusiastic, intelligent fellows. Some of them walked over the 'mountains' from Kirk Michael, and would have to walk back through the snow at 3 o'clock in the morning—'foo'! Well, never mind! My lecture in Douglas on 'Old Kirk Braddan<sup>1</sup>' was a failure. The people were most hearty and indulgent: so it must have been my own fault. Portraits of my father, and my brother Hugh, were botched and feeble. You will not see them. The fact is the people were too indulgent, stimulated me to unstinted mimicry—buffoonery—what you

<sup>1</sup> His father's vicarage.

will. And they laughed and laughed, till with horror I awoke to the consciousness that I was treating the old Braddan life as a school of comedy, of which my father constituted the central figure and protagonist. Some tender things I believe I said, but the subjective condition of my hearers, aggravated by my own impudence, carried everything away into a *βάραθρον* of farce. *Vae mihi!*

I should not think you would take to Scotchmen, and Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls* is not to be compared with *A Window in Thrums*. But I am just now the victim of a perfect Scotch craze. I really am dangerous; so be careful! I felt tremendously moved at that dinner. I *was na foo*, certainly not with 'Scotch drink'; but I am fairly mad with 'seempathy.' You see I *am* a Scotchman, and, upon occasions, I gravitate largely to the Caledonian basis. Some ancient ghost arises within me, ancestral for that matter, and I can't control it. Heaven only knows what *crapula* inherited from generations of toddy-brewing Borderers takes possession of me. Foo? foo? na, na! not foo, not even a drappie in my ee: but a glorious swell of delight, the consciousness of the greater country absorbing the less. *Nescio qua dulcedine laetus*, I shake and tremble. We had a nice Irishman at our dinner. He spoke in such a way that I was constrained to embrace him with a certain effusion (*symptoms*, you will say—now blow you!). Isn't Crockett the author of *The Raiders*? He seems to have a tidy notion of advertizing himself.

I sincerely agree with you about David Wright<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For many years Vicar of Stoke Bishop, Bristol.

I only once or twice had an opportunity of hearing him. But he was a great preacher, and I use the epithet advisedly. One drifts away from the preachers; they are almost hull-down; but Wright goes up upon the horizon still, a Peak of Teneriffe. And the *differentia* of such men is enormous. It reminds one of what has been, and what we may yet, perhaps, work our way back to. So splendid and gracious a form cannot surely perish out of the world. Only close to it, puny, miserable, and fatuous, is the ordinary *conciò* of the period. I often think that the art is a lost art, and conjecture that it was a very great one. I measure it, too, by the terrible certainty with which I feel that I cannot even approach the τέμερος of what must always be to me a *mystery*.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 11, 1895.

That was a nice fascicle of Arnoldian<sup>1</sup> γνῶμαι, or quasi-γνῶμαι. I must get the book, and *will*. Surely what he said about F. was meant 'succastic'—a most unworthy σχῆμα, of which, however, I fear he was capable in his day (*nefasto die*).

Is R. leaving? It is enough to make your heart sick within you. He is a wholesome atmosphere. The very face of him clears away noisome vapours, and is 'as the sun in his might.' . . . Correspond with him. So sweet and flexible a quill cannot but be

<sup>1</sup> M. Arnold, *Letters*. I had quoted a few things from them.

amenable to fine and tender uses. Try, mind you do! Don't neglect this!

About Dakyns I will not bate one jot of hope. To be with Dakyns is the thing. What can be done by the best pen? Dakyns is not a pen nor a wielder of pens, but a passion-flower; and to have that twining round you in a thousand convolutions of close-fitting gyration is—well—a luxury, and I am grateful for it.

I have been reading Berkeley. It brings back to me very happy days. Old George Wood, my darling old madman who watched over Napoleon in St. Helena, the cleverest old creature I ever knew, a Lieutenant in the 17th, a friend of Heber, a pure idealist, comes before me in a vision of fire. How we used to talk about Berkeley! The accent, semi-Manx, semi-Irish—it seemed tuned to that theme. I always talk Berkeley with that *cantilena*. I dare say Berkeley used it too. And don't you revel in the style? It is something to remember that he took it all at last to Oxford: it was a true consecration.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 13, 1895.

We are all agog for marvels. This is the normal condition of the Manx folk. Anything that seems to set at defiance the ordinary routine of natural experience fits in exactly with their mood, is accepted indeed as a positive *bonus*. They hunger and thirst for miracle; you can't give them too much. Impatient of science and all such trumpery, they wel-

come with delight this relegation to the 'First Cause.' Quite at home in the primordial embrace, they snuggle to it, and are happy. Anything that could diminish the area of the marvellous is resented by them. It is a philosophy of a sort, and they look so dismally at you if you enclose the smallest atom of space from the great common of the unexplained. And when they do hazard an explanation it is such fun <sup>1</sup>. . . .

Isn't that *marvellous*? Well that is what I live among: and really whether I'm in the body or out of the body I sometimes can hardly tell. The situation, if not Pauline, belongs at least to the Apostolic age, the protoplasm of Mythus.

I have lately read *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* and *The Raiders*, both Scotch to a degree that would choke you. But I have also read an English story, *The Prisoner of Zenda* (ridiculous rubbish). The evil savour of this bosh sent me to my Euripides, and I read the *Heraclides* and the *Hippolytus*. How very fine the latter! It was so amusing to read it with my old notes, but I found them give out. A Valckenaer would come in handy. Positively Euripides was of *la première qualité*.

I don't make any progress with my Macmillan book. I must gird up my loins to the work. It is absurd to be going on as if I was to live for ever. Plans open out *ad infinitum*—but—the tremendous *but*; well no, not tremendous, but not the less a fact. Woe is me for the wasted years! And after all how about *reading*? Would it not be better and more obvious, more suited to my powers and condition?

<sup>1</sup> An illustration follows too long to insert.



Mind you never give up, as I did, quite twenty years of your life to mere idling. It was delightful, but not profitable. And I am even now inclined to say 'D—n the profitable!' Only it would be so naughty, and probably but a blasphemous and ineffectual *ignoratio elenchi*. Ah, the *elenchus* grips me, shakes me: I can't put it off, and I don't care. Still—*you* look out!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

February 17, 1895.

That's right! Take care of yourself. Reduce yourself as far as may be to the life of a zoophyte. *Do* absolutely nothing. There are a thousand tricks by which you can affect to be doing something, even to be (y)earnest and fretful. But in reality do nothing. That's your tip. If we were together I could show you exactly how it is done; but by mere reflection you can summon me up from the depths of the *far niente* I wish you to imitate. Also, the duplicity which is needed; there again, I am a perfect exemplar. It is pleasant to me to think how useful I can be to a young friend. Sir, I shall not have lived in vain. My influenza bears fruit.

I am now reading *The Rebel Queen*, by Besant. The writer is almost unknown to me, and I rather like him. I feel, though, that I may be 'sliddherin' away into God knows what. There is a facility about the style which I ought perhaps to resent. The facile is always to me so *glissant*; and, at my time of life, you wouldn't have me a crag-climber, would you? Honest MacAdam! I love thee.

Our gulls are getting very tame; they will come in at the windows next. Meanwhile the poor little songsters, for whom we spread the crumbs, are scared away by these big boobies, and get nothing. The cat contemplates the whole scene sardonically. The gannets, I suppose, are in Africa. 'O for the wings!' You don't like my photograph! I know you don't. Neither does any one; but the die is cast. There is no return.

PS.—Just read in the December *Macmillan* a very pleasant, *humane* article on the 'Poetae Mediocres' by Ainger. What a good man he is!

To M. K.<sup>1</sup>

RAMSEY,

February 28, 1895.

I am generally rather a happy 'surt' of man, but your letter makes me very happy. How kind you are! Up in the morning betimes to catch people still in their beds warm with a generous enthusiasm, to surprise their sympathies before they had 'faded into the light of common day,' and to collect all their 'loving' words for me. That was a good and faithful act; and I am deeply grateful.

Yes, the man was right. I do love the poor wastrels, and you are right, I have it from my father. He had a way of taking for granted not only the innate virtue of these outcasts, but their unquestioned respectability. He, at least, never questioned it. The effect was twofold.

Some of the 'weak brethren' felt uncomfortable at

<sup>1</sup> A letter in the possession of Miss Graves, and sent with hers.

being met on those terms of equality. My father might have been practising on them the most dreadful irony; and they were 'that shy' and confused. But it was not irony, not a bit of it; just a sense of respect, fine consideration for the poor 'sowls,' well—respect, that's it, respect for all human beings; *his* respect made *them* respectable. Wasn't it grand? To others my father was a perfect Port-y-shee<sup>1</sup>. To be in the same room with him was enough. To be conscious that he was there, that he didn't fight strange of them, that he never dreamt of 'scowlin' them, that they were treated as gentlemen. Oh! the comfort, the gerjugh<sup>2</sup>, the interval of repose. Extraordinary, though, was it not? To think of a *Pazon* respecting men's vices even; not as vices, God forbid! but as parts of *them*, very likely all but inseparable from them; at any rate, *theirs*. Pitying with an eternal pity, but not exposing, not rebuking. My father would have considered he was 'taking a liberty' if he had confronted the sinner with his sin. Doubtless he carried this too far. But don't suppose for a moment that the 'weak brethren' thought he was conniving at their weakness. Not they—they saw the *delicacy* of his conduct. You don't think, do you? that these poor souls are incapable of appreciating delicacy. God only knows how far down into their depths of misery and degradation the sweetness of that delicacy descends. It haunts the drunkard's dreams, and breathes a breath of purity into the bosom of the abandoned. That is the power of a noble innocence, a *respect* for our fellow-creatures

<sup>1</sup> Port of Peace.<sup>2</sup> Solace.

—glib phrases, but how little understood and acted on! With my father it was quite natural. He was a hot hater, though, I can tell you. He hated hypocrisy, he hated lying, and he hated presumption and pretentiousness. He loved sincerity, truth, and modesty. It seemed as if he felt sure that, with these virtues, the others could not fail to be present. Was he far wrong? Yet many people would have thought him stern.

One dear old cousin of his comes to my mind. We called him U. T., that is Uncle Tom. He was not our uncle—we never had one—but the uncle of our predecessors at Kirk Braddan. And almost every Sunday evening he spent at the Vicarage—poor old thing! He was quite silent. One thing, though, he would say, as ‘regglar as clock-work.’ My mother occasionally apologized for the evening being so exclusively musical (we were great singers). Whenever she did so, the reply was prompt from U. T., ‘I’m passionately fond of music.’ This to us children was highly ludicrous. Indeed my mother was amused—she had no Manx blood in her—but my father accepted U. T.’s assurance with the utmost confidence. His chivalrous nature, more deeply tinged than hers with Keltic tenderness, or the very finest kind of Keltic make-believe (Anglice-humbug; oh those English!), had no difficulty in accepting U. T.’s ‘passionately.’ *Passion* in U. T. Well, to us it was a splendid joke. I sometimes wonder whether the vicar too, at times, had lucid intervals of the bare, naked reality. He had a fine sense of humour; but he had a still finer sense of honour, and he would have considered it

a baseness to laugh at the poor thing, with its pretence of passion, trying to screen its forlornness. What U. T. felt was not the passion for music, but just the soothing, comforting sense of being at home with us, of being accepted as one of ourselves, of not being 'scoulded,' of indisputable respectability, of being thought capable of 'passion,' even so ethereal a passion as that of music. How blessed those hours must have been to U. T.! He sometimes missed them. But it never was my father's fault. Was it U. T.'s? Well, we children had no idea that he drank. But now of course I know that when U. T. did not appear on a Sunday, he must have been 'hard at it' on Saturday; and into the kingdom of Heaven he must have taken the Sundays, not the Saturdays.

Forgive all this. But I have been so much touched with your taking up my reference to the dear old Vicar of Braddan, that I could not help extending the portrait a little.

And for the poor backsliders, the 'weak brethren,' the outcasts—aw! let's feel for the lek, and 'keep a houl' o' their han'.'

Do write again. You will do me so much good.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*March 7, 1895.*

I can't write, I can think only in one direction<sup>1</sup>. It is terrible. . . . I will write soon again. Under

<sup>1</sup> The death of one whom he had known as boy and master at Clifton.

these strokes let us creep a little closer together, a little closer together. All this draws my love back again to the old place. I do feel for it, for you, as well as for ——. But the rest is silence.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

March 17, 1895.

The days of your mourning are now over. N. has told me about the sermon, which I suppose must have been very good, though I long to hear what you thought of it. It was a great occasion.

I have been on the very verge of influenza, but escaped, *vix et ne vix quidem*, seedy, weary, feverish, but I dare say all right. The progress of spring helps me much. The days are becoming glorious, and the garden shows promise of rewarding the Adamic Birkett. Crocuses spring up like tongues of living fire, and hyacinths display a *bona voluntas*. Everything is late, but everything is consentient and sound.

These things do their duty; but the mental Spring delays. Indeed, generally at this time of the year I lie fallow. My sympathy with growth and bloom absorbs the sort of dormant faculty, and I make no haste myself to bloom or grow. How is it with you? Any shooting or output? There is no hurry: but don't give it up altogether.

The Marshal has petitioned for a photograph. So away over the water it goes, one of the *bearded* lot, smug, bucolic, the thriving Manx farmer, guilt-

less of ideas, incubating repose, a peaceful centre of lambs, rooks, and incipient turnips. It is good for us to be here.

Gorse has been terribly retarded, but it will now assert itself; and, before another month has passed, I shall be in the Curragh, among the bog-bean and listening for cuckoos. Mist lies upon the ground, but above it there is fine blue air, and the sea is blue. Take a good walk, and tell me about it.

The direct outcome of all your Clifton trouble is to me something of a new life, and gives me great comfort. It is the beginning of a new current streaming Clifton-wards.

To peep in upon you now would be a subtle delight: I see it all through veils of melting vapour, that melt and melt and make me inexpressibly happy. Very likely it is best to leave it so, not to take any action, but simply submit to an influence that is wholly sweet. It may even be a euthanasia: be it so: upon this I would not be unwilling to die. Yet the bog-bean blossoms, and the cuckoo calls. Isn't it odd that I get an instantaneous picture, an *impressionist* picture of the funeral? Corresponding about business I see just a sentence. The funeral had passed by the house; it was on its way to Portbury. That helped me a good deal—'on its way to *Portbury*.' Exactly so, and where else? I am glad to think he lies at Portbury.

Symonds' life is with me. Brown has done his work well: the book is even fascinating. But I have one serious complaint, and I have laid it before the author. Symonds I always thought of as emi-

nently a *literary man*. What I had looked forward to in the Biography was the picture of literary joys or solaces. Well, Brown shows him abundantly as working away in feverish haste *to get a lot done*, not as exulting in the literary energies and appreciations (don't they call them?); but the man, the essential man, according to Brown, is the *agonizing* searcher after the *absolute*. I think I just recognize him in that phrase, one of his 'many moods,' but to make that the key-note of Symonds is surely a total mistake.

TO MRS. GILL <sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

April 3, 1895.

Your beautiful and elegiac letter is the poem that was wanting to this sad occasion. It expresses my feelings, nor does it contain a thought or an emotion with which I do not sympathize. I cling to the dear old place with the fondest affection. I was baptized there; almost all whom I loved and revered were associated with its history, especially Hugh Stowell, the saint and patriarch of our church, and my own father, the Rev. Robert Brown. 'The only church in Douglas where the poor go'—I dare say that is literally true. But I believe it will continue to be so. It will be 'a free and open church.' You see I postulate the continuity. . . The church will still be situate in the midst of the poor, it will still be the centre of the peculiarly Manx district, the focus and the rallying point of the native population.

<sup>1</sup> On the pulling down of old St. Matthew's Church, Douglas.



The 'homeliness' will for a long time be missing, a great though I trust not an irreparable loss.

For 'homeliness' we shall have beauty. Why should not the poor enjoy this advantage? When they find that this beauty is their own, freely communicated, they will surely regain the feeling of homeliness. It is not difficult to be at home with beauty, and that is an elevating influence.

Yes, the old thing, the dear old thing is beautiful, and the sensation is compounded of many elements, more or less consciously present to the minds of those who worship there. But I imagine that the main element is the unity of the congregation, their common status in life, their common nationality, common Manxmen, common isolation in the midst of the surging sea of innovation, progress, and foreign bustle.

Perhaps you will say that all this is adequately and more naturally and simply guaranteed by the old church as it stands in the old market-place. Undoubtedly it is; but the decree is gone forth, the space is demanded by what are called 'the needs of the town': years ago we might have foreseen this. Douglas, old Douglas, is knocked to pieces. A new Douglas has risen, with new ideas, new requirements. Where can we find a shrine for the old simplicity? Even if it exists, where can we house it? I know of a case where, owing to similar demands, a church had to be removed. But it was built of grand old stones which it was possible to transfer, one by one, numbered and arranged for reconstruction on the new site. St. Matthew's is, architecturally, a mere

rubble heap, and cannot be subjected to such a process. And, as I pass it, I feel as if I saw a dear old mother, sweet in her weakness, trembling at the approach of dissolution, but not appealing to me against the inevitable, rather endeavouring to reassure me by her patience, and pointing to a hopeful future. Very likely it was thus that an older St. Matthew's appealed to good Bishop Wilson, who was far too deeply imbued with reverence for antiquity to contemplate with stoicism the removal of anything once dedicated to sacred uses. . . . I have a lovely water-colour of St. Matthew's by some local artist. It does not show the whole building, but merely the belfry and just a bay or two. This is enough, though, to suggest the attitude, the nestling you speak of. To me all such circumstances and relations are extremely precious. I know them well in Italy, where you have also observed them. The church at home among her people, taking part in all their affairs, carts and booths right up against the walls, no mutual avoidance, quite the opposite, a sweet cosiness of benediction, a localization of peace in the midst of turmoil; a man lighting his pipe, I will not say immediately, from the lamp that stands at the feet of the Madonna; bright laughing girls, the rich fruitage and colour of the south. And every now and then a good wife passes beneath the belfry, sets down her basket, and says a prayer, and dreams a dream. Ah! it is delicious. We never had quite that in Douglas, and we assuredly never shall. But one thing I hope, and that is, that the church will always be open. If so, it is but a step, and the

tired market-woman can refresh her soul with the brooding of the sanctuary.

So I do not think I am doing wrong in helping on this movement for a new church. With my water-colour I shall always keep and treasure what you have written to me. An elegy I have called it, alas! it is so, and it is destined to be monumental. Thank you very much.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

*April 20, 1895.*

. . . . .  
Moor's death has drawn me to the old place with a strange power. I had been getting very indifferent to it; but this is a summons which calls to me trumpet-tongued, and I obey it. Love flows again, and I long to be there. He lies at Portbury, and the rain beats down upon his grave this gloomy evening, and I would fain stand there bareheaded.

. . . . .  
Seriously, your little visit of last year was the most delightful episode I ever enjoyed. You were in magnificent form, and the high-water mark was that glorious tramp from Port Iern to Peel, by the coast. Do you remember the heather on the north side of Cronk-ny-eary-laa, and the rich sweet water-gleams under Contrary Head? Ah! that was good! When can I induce you and Mrs. Worthington to repeat

the dose? Elixir is scarce. R. too ought by this time to take his place, and, tolerantly, to suppress his youthful vigour, accommodating it to the senile and demi-semi-senile pace of certain duffers. C. might very well and very profitably be introduced to the Keltico-Scandinavian *cultus*. She would look lovely in Glen Aldhyn, or harebell-crowned on Skye-hill. There is yet another imp of Faerie-land now coming on. Wouldn't she skip and bound on shore and Mooragh, and gather unimaginable bog-bean from peaceful waters, willow-swept, Ballaugh-way, or in Lezayre? Yet I suppose you will bring them up in the true English fashion, half Devonshire, half Switzerland. Well, well, I know we are out of it.

. . . . .

About these Scotchmen. Surely *Beside the Bonny Briar Bush* is, in many ways, delicious. I don't care about the Manse element, the stuff about sermons, and the all-pervading 'releegious' flavour. But the 'Doctor'—isn't he grand? Crockett in his *Raiders* is a bit too ambitious. Mounting on the shoulders of Louis Stevenson, he tries to follow Scott. *Pindarum quisquis* is all that can be said. But that article in the *New Review*, though extremely amusing, is abominably unfair. What was the title? 'Literature of the Kailyard' was it? By a Scotchman, too, one Miller! If you have not read it, I think it would make you laugh, though your heart might burn within you; for Miller is a cynic, and you have (or very nearly!) escaped that universal tar-brush. Go on escaping it: you will be all the happier, and so will your wife. It is the *labes gehennae*, and when

there is any tendency of nature towards it, one must weed it out vigorously.

. . . . .

Inexpressibly welcome are your sketches, lineal and verbal. I know Tregenna, have lunched there, and saw seals playing around a fishing-skiff. They were dodging for the fish, and the men would now and then heave a ballast-stone at them, just to bid them keep clear.

St. Gurnard's? Yes, I have been there, and there I had a female guide to the Head—an extraordinary thing to happen, I suppose. Such a nice, good woman. We talked about families and so forth. And when we parted, she looked long and earnestly at me, and said, 'I should like to see your wife.' Was not that wholly beautiful?

No, Cornwall is not England.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 12, 1895.

Yesterday we were at Ballaugh Curragh to get the bog-bean. It was most glorious. The flower was in perfect bloom, just at its *akme*, and we could have gathered cart-loads. Probably no daintier beauty decorates the British Isles. It is so delicate, so complex, and so distinguished. We also found the bog-violet in great abundance. In the train we had much talk with old Manx people, market-folk, deliciously inquisitive and communicative. Some of them knew me, and were eager to amplify their

knowledge. I had to correct some errors, for it is evident I am becoming legendary. One was the belief that I had 'kept a school' at Exeter (!) in partnership with my cousin, Will. Howard. 'Belted Will?' I asked. 'Aw, well, I dunnow about the *belt* at all. Laak enough, but we never heard of it.' Then the kindly Manx *resipiscentia*. 'Deed, I be-lave in mee heart there *wass* a belt, too, though, or wass it a cap laak those Collidge boees has got at Castletown over?'

Nothing could be better than the A. P.<sup>1</sup> for your youngsters. I would steep every one, I would steep myself in that supreme bath of criticism. I can hardly think of it and its early impression on me without tears. Is it not so? More than criticism—life, energy, sincerity, the most absolute ἀγχίνοια, a διδασκαλία so confidential, so unwearied, so *affectionate*, that I feel as if I had known Horace in the flesh, been his pupil—no *plagosus Orbilius* he, but an old friend, wise and kind and *interested in me*. Oh, if I had had such a one!

Dust flies: the spring is overdoing it. I hardly ever remember a more lovely week than that which has just passed. And now Summer stands at the door.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

May 21, 1895.

. . . Your account of certain perambulations make my mouth water, and, indeed, sent me over the

<sup>1</sup> *Ars Poetica*.

mountains one day to Laxey. It was a walk begun with Lamplugh<sup>1</sup> and ending with Rydings. 'Betwix' the two was a fine *hiatus* of staring and dreaming. . . . Some wretched artillery volunteers are to encamp on the Mooragh in Whitsun week. They make the place intolerable. Barrule is the least interposition that I can stand. . . . We shall hear the thunder of great guns, but in the distance :—

Suave procul . . . turbantibus aera bombis.

Y. is an angel, but a desperately quiet one. Are they all 'laak yandhar' in heaven—What? . . . His effort (*ef fort!*) seems to be to hit the asymptote of definition. To take  $x$ , and then its contradictory  $y$ , and mix them up in a sweet electuary of mumble and retraction, is his line. Really an effort, and a very resolute one, the outcome probably of a vow that you shall carry away with you from an interview with him no statement that could possibly be quoted as made by him on his own authority. What a beloved old *palimpsest*!  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omega$  and  $\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\lambda\omega$ ! scratch and scrape, you'll never get to the original *script*. It must have been a long discipline that could produce such a result. A *safe* man? A patent safety, a Milner chubb-locked. No, nothing so strong: a mist, a cloud, a smoke, a deliquescence of all the categories, a negation, a blank. . . . He would be amiable if he were not so cautious. 'Billy-be-cautious' was a fool to him.

<sup>1</sup> A F.G.S. engaged in the survey of the island.—J. Q.

TO MRS. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

May 29, 1895.

There is not much chance of my leaving the island this year, nothing that we could build upon in making arrangements.

For practical purposes, therefore, consider me as not coming to Devonport. Write me off. Dismiss me to the limbo of frustrations. Suspend no movement on so precarious a thread. Natheless I love you all, and would fain be with you.

Your husband is a great joy to me—I'm sure you know. He warms and stimulates, does me infinite good. I can *rest in him*: that is a marvellous comfort—marvellous, because he is not a restful man. The spin of his mind, though, with its tremendous rapidity, is like the spin of a humming-top, it is musical, it soothes me. And I believe I supply something to him.

On my table lie his beautifully figured illustrations of raindrops—that is the man, too—dip, splash, and a thousand waves, pulses, beads, and coronets of exultation. Scientific knowledge does not abide with me, but I can appreciate physical form, and the tenderness of kinetic delicacy.

You will be very happy at Ivybridge. Inland from it are very delightful places; among them, the valley of the Yealm. I question whether anything can come up to Dartmoor at its best.

. . . . .  
We have been much, of late, to Ballaglass. It is



most lovely—the primroses and blue-bells amazing. The other day we discovered an old weaver there, and his wife. The man was a handsome old fellow, fair and sunny-looking in his advanced years; the wife a brunette, ‘with eyes of flame,’ wrinkled like a sibyl, the remains of a terrible beauty upon her. And it turned out that she was from my parish (Braddan), and knew all about me and mine. Wondrous! the old times lived again; my father, with circumstance of the minutest accuracy, the little vicarage, the church, the very flies and gnats of contemporary gossip preserved in this amber. She was like a stick of amber. But how she laughed, how she cried, how she clasped her hands, and ‘blest her soul,’ and ‘dear me’d,’ and wrapped me in a san benito of sympathy and fire—God help me! and how foolish we were! And how the whole relation was inexhaustible, and how we drank from each other full draughts of garrulous delight, and never tired, and how we scandalized Edith and Dora—well, well, it was a high time. And the old weaver weaves rugs, and is now weaving one for me. I think he is rather *exorbitant*! But who cares what exorbitance when the glory of the accident transcends the ‘orb’ of ‘common doin’s’ so magnificently.

And this was the second prophetic kind of person that laid hold of me within the last month. She was saga, fatidica, black, Cumaeon. The other was a sweet old thing that I came upon in Kirk Braddan churchyard. I was sitting near my father’s and mother’s grave; my head was upon my hands, my hands upon my walking-stick. I was dumb and

dazed. Suddenly I was aware of a woman within two yards of me. She was cleaning and painting two little tombstones. I spoke to her, and, in a moment, she was revealed to me as an old friend. She too had known my father, used to be sent by her mother to 'show the vicar the way to the shore at Kenisthal.' A beautiful, stately old darling. So wise and good. Had she been an old sweetheart? I really cannot say. I can well imagine it. But we stood confronting each other in a tranquillity so delicious. Yes, God has given peace to both the wild young hearts; her husband is a blacksmith—and I shall go and see him. Pardon all this nonsense! To me, however, it is more, and better.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 30, 1895.

I dare say R. would oppose to your thrust about the *Eclogues* that he did not believe in the sincerity of my love for those old darlings. There has been so much factitious enthusiasm exhibited about those poems that I pardon the doubt. But I know in whom I have believed, and, till I die, the *Eclogues* will continue to be what they have always been to me. Tell somebody to look under my pillow!

I am reading right through the *Athenae Oxonienses* to freshen up my memory of a life-long favourite, and write an article upon it for Henley. *That*, I believe, you would not be averse to my doing, pomes or no pomes.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 30, 1895.

I must go over the hills again and seek an unfailing Egeria who lurks for me in the deep hollows of Nickisen. The last time I was there I nearly fell into the fathomless pool of the mocking fiend. Indeed I did get in, but got out again very quickly. I had been dreaming (I had a whisky flask), it was very hot, though I lay in the shade of the hazels, and the *boggane* took advantage of me. The delicious old wretch! I wonder whether I shall be found dead in the depths of such a dell—*ambrosiis lacertis*: for it is He or She (Lui or Elle) according to my fancy.

I was a whole week at Keswick. The W.'s behaved like angels, clever, provident angels. They bade me go about my own business, which I did. I had two good solitary mountain rambles, each a whole day long. I heard Wilson preach on Sunday morning. In the evening I had Skiddaw to my preacher.

An incredible amount of time is taken up with my editing of *Rydings' Tales*. These tales are by my friend Mr. Rydings, of Laxey, the Lancashire man who has so thoroughly mastered the Manx dialect.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

July 9, 1895.

Glorious view from above Cronk-y-Voddy, whether looking back to Rhenass or forward to Kirkmichael-

shore. We were specially fascinated by the sweet soft outline of the Kirkmichael 'brews' trending away towards Jurby Point—the outline and the colour! Of course we left Rhenass behind the Fall. It was really too awful to face for the second time the band (!), which roared and brayed at the gates. From this point our walk was a perfect rapture of delightful solitude . . . much upon the scene of your story. . . .

. . . Yesterday I walked a Scotch friend from Port Erin to Peel by the coast. You know the Lagg? It is almost finer than Glen May. . . .

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

July 16, 1895.

The mountain walks may well comfort you. I too have been 'over the hills and far away.' We walked (Horatio Brown and myself) from Port Erin to Peel by Bradda, Fleshwick, Carnanes, Slock, Cronk-ny-eary-laa (top), Eary Cushlyn, the Lagg, Glen May, Peel Hill. How beautiful the Lagg is! right down in it more beautiful than to look at it from above. To get up on those 'commons'—the joy of it all! How insignificant our hopes and fears! What pigmies our minds! *A whole bench of bishops throned on South Barrule*, what would it add? Nay, but what would it subtract? And Glen Rushen and Glen May, and the dappling of green fields between the heather limits! 'Chut! gerr along with ye!' . . .

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

July 16, 1895.

I am anxious about this business. I am an old friend as well as an 'old hand,' and one thing is certain and is my support. You will not, you cannot for a moment believe that I am influenced by any object save that of cheering you and comforting you through a great trial. Machiavelli-Brown! a new character. In that character my experience may be of use, my *brains* are at your service, but my *heart*, my better organ, lies ever at your feet. Use both, and be of good courage.

. . . . .

PS. I am in a state of great excitement about Cowper. Reading him right through I was more than ever struck with his innumerable felicities. Yet how very terribly he sinks! The style sinks, but still more the thought. I imagined that his fine taste had piloted him through the theological *mare mortuum* of his age and school with comparative safety. But really, it is not so. He is often quite abominable; so rude, so insolent. He sends his antagonists to the Devil; literally, if I am not mistaken, tells them to go to H-ll; exults over them, sneers, jeers, jokes. His mildest attitude is a 'sarve them right,' and his idea of God as the owner of some patent sort of peep-show, which, if we don't appreciate, he will d—n our eyes for a set of God knows what, is absolutely Swiftian in its utter vulgarity. What

a detestable poison has penetrated his vitals ! Mind, it is not the doctrine, but the swagger and infernal rudeness that offend me. The style too becomes infected ; with all this ghastly machinery of unreason, he takes it upon him to be flippant. Such 'awful mirth' is almost unparalleled in literature. He even assumes an athletic, or pseudo-athletic vigour of contemptuous denunciation. *Athletic*, and *here !* poor dear old thing ! But the felicities ! here are some.

#### EXPOSTULATION.

The secret power  
That balances the wings of every hour,  
But thou wast born amid the din of arms,  
And sucked a breast that panted with alarms.

Pardon the *sucked*. *Suck'dst* would be grammatical, but harsh.

#### THE SOFA.

Nor less composure waits upon the roar  
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice  
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip  
Through the cleft rock, and shining as they fall  
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length  
In matted grass, that with a livelier green  
Betrays the secret of the silent course.

Lovely, I think. In line 5 I regret *lose* just after *loose*. But try to improve it !

He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend  
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,  
And taints the golden ear.

Worthy of Milton.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

July 24, 1895.

'Tis the Conquest, anno MLXVI of the Hall Caine era, or Ol. I. 2 (δρόμῳ ἐνίκησε Κόρουβος Κάϊν) ?

The Island swarms with Yankees. I had four of them last Monday, two yesterday. Mother and daughter had a car ready at the door. Bore me away swiftly inevitable to Maughold. The rape of Proserpine was a fool to it. I was Ceres' daughter, *rapta Diti*, gathering some silly violets or *candida lilia* in my study. I was surprised. Help, help, O heaven! *Raptor agit currus*, I had to go. There were also *comites*, witnesses of the deed, Manx friends filling with me *calathosque sinumque*. I had to go. In vain they strove. I was a 'gone coon.' I had to show them Kirk Maughold, its runes, its well. I had to discuss Hall Caine from his crown to his toe. They had seen the Hall, of course they had. The younger woman was an authoress ('This is *the* authoress,' so her mother introduced *La belle dame sans merci*). The authoress was as sharp as a needle.

'What do you think of . . . ?'

Alas! alas! This ravishing had circumstances of great cruelty, had it not? I struggled; I put up silent vows.

'Do you consider . . . ?' I hesitate, I boggle. In vain I pointed to the innocent runes, in vain I sought to divert their fury by indicating Barrule. Barrule

was clear, pitilessly clear, and smiled upon my undoing. *Americanae, Americanae!* spare me, daughters of Atlas! let me go! They wouldn't, they didn't. They drove me back, it is true, to the boat. Charon received me trembling. No, he received *them*, and I was left with all my shame at the end of the pier. People laughed! My Manx friends were there; they laughed. Is there no sympathy for—a ravished pedagogue of unimpeachable character? What will become of us? The authoress is to write an article on Hall Caine, 'novelist, dramatist, man.' ['Farewell to the bark, &c.'] Their method is to call on my friend in Douglas, get a note of introduction from him to me, and then to Henna on steeds of flame:—

Quorum per colla iubasque  
Excutiunt [never mind the prosody! I'm beyond that.]  
obscura tinctas ferrugine habenas.

My two Manx friends were both of them in throes of Bibliopole parturition, and therefore demanding all my maieutic aid and consolations. Poor fellows! Little they got of it. Proserpine! *Περσεφόνη* as *Ειλέθνια*! The function was impossible. Henceforth let them not invoke me. I come not to their *fer ophem*.

Verily I dwell in the tents of Kedar, but I can do something in the way of maintaining public decency. For *private* decency, I fear this screed is not a voucher that I can rely upon. You are now drawing nigh to Armageddon. I wish you well through it. When, emerging, you find yourself within measurable distance of the Giant's Causeway, let me know. Strange things may happen. If I do cross the herring-pond,



the G. C. will be my goal. But I positively must have a race up one of the Mourne Mountains—that is indispensable.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

August 13, 1895.

I am very busy arranging about stiles on Peel Head. Do you remember? Redans, Malakoffs, demilunes, mamelons—the horrid, horrent, diabolically perverse impedimenta of the route! Astounding contrivances wherein was manifested the maximum of detention, *retention*, or whatever you choose to call it, united to the minimum of stability—a subtle and most damnable all-over crumbability. That moment of awful suspense upon the ἀκμή of projection God knows which way. The miserable *wire*! Ah, Apollo! is it thus you serve your votaries? The miscellaneous sub-collapse, the agony for finality, and, when it has come, the shameful and demoralizing finis! Well, all this shall be no more. Whence you dimly (fraudulently, I say) conjectured the mountains of Mourne (you remember?) there shall now be a serene platform of speculation, a σκοπιά for dyspeptic passengers, who will be happy and quite amicable, and free from spleen-nurtured visions tending to risk and the clouding of friendship.

A *mural* crown is the least that I anticipate, unless the interested Peelites vote me a civic one besides. In anticipation of this result, write me an inscription, or two inscriptions, in the sense of a *bene*

*meruit* as citizen and also as *τειχεσιπλήτης*. We must contrive to have a walk there again, under larger conditions, and you shall approve my work, and recognize my ability as engineer of hearts as well as 'h'obstacles.'

TO A. BARTHOLOMEW, ESQ.

RAMSEY,

*August 22, 1895.*

I thank you sincerely for the little book<sup>1</sup>. The letters are most delightful, showing, as they do, the depth of love that moved that quiet heart. His relation to Clifton was vital, it was also pathetic. He poured into it so much that, under other circumstances, might have flowed in other directions. Thus we had of him almost more than was our due, almost more than we deserved. The portrait is simply exquisite. That is indeed the dear old F. M., kind, affectionate, wise, in whom nature had established her finest balance, the most delicate equipoise of passionate impulse and grave restraint. You see it in that face, and you see the discipline that comes from even a higher source. It is much to have known him and loved him.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

*August 22, 1895.*

Behold me on the eve of starting for Ireland! Yes, after all, I am going. Irwin is at Portsalon on Lough

<sup>1</sup> Memorials of his brother, the F. M. B. of the text.

Swilly, and I am to meet him at Port Rush to-morrow with a £10 note in my pocket. I shall try what can be done.

There came to the beach a poor exile from Mona.

Will they rob me, or love me? I shall submit to either fate with equanimity, and you shall hear the result.

. . . . .

The other day I got from Bartholomew's brother, 'F. M. B. *desiderantibus*.' I wish some one at Clifton who knew him had written for the little book an account of him as he went in and out amongst us. It is limited to his travels in 1893.

You see him making that wild, hot, eager snatch at India. It was true, he *would* have India, and he had her, the witch with her terrible embrace and tiger choleraic eyes. But surely the man, Bartholomew, was normal at Clifton; his home, his habitat, his sweet judicious ways, his quiet depth of love—these were of the essence, and they were of Clifton.

There is an exquisite portrait in the volume.

TO HORATIO F. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

August 25, 1895.

The Manx tunes will be out ere long in two different collections, one by A. W. Moore, the other by W. H. Gill. Gill wants me to write English words for 'Mylchraine.' The Manx words are abominably inadequate; and I have long ago refused to translate

them. The modern words would require to have an entirely new *motif*.

The Manx Emigrant would be a good subject, but it is rather trite. Something that would come out of the very bowels of the land, or rumble in the guts of the sea, is 'wambling in my wame' as I write. But I don't feel in the mood, and nothing I suppose will come of it.

There is disaster in the fall of this old tune; but our disasters have been so obscure, not definite disasters indeed, but a long suppression of nameless miseries. If it had pleased God to inflict upon us a crowning woe like the '45! But — and Nature, you see, has not been unkind to us. One thing often touches me—the deserted cottages (*tholthans*) which are the results of emigration—the cold *chiollogh* (hearth), the bit of thorn where children have played, the *trammon* (elder-tree) at the gable to keep away the fairies. And the vacant space, just so many feet of air, the *home*, the place where the bed was, where babes were born and women wept.

Far away in America or Australia many a heart must go back to such scenes with irrepressible *longing*. Oh, if I could only comfort such hearts! But—and what is this BUT? The gift going from me? The drying up of the spring? Perhaps so, nay almost certainly so. . . .

Bartholomew's portrait most exquisite. I could not look at it without choking. I am a born sobber; and, if I give way, it is all up with me—'Down, down! *hysterica passio*'—that is my only chance. . . .

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

*September 12, 1895.*

. . . I have just returned from Ireland.

Among other places, I was nearly a week at Comber, near Belfast, and visited Grey Abbey<sup>1</sup>. The similarity to St. German's was most striking. I searched for the sandstone from which the Lancets have been wrought and found it at last, not in the Scabbro quarries exactly, but in an old disused quarry at Ballyrogan, hard by. I have brought you some specimens to compare with the alien stone at Peel. But I daresay you have already procured them for yourself.

Affrica is buried at Grey; also her husband, John de Courcy. Her effigy (if it be hers) is tolerably complete. Poor old de Courcy! Of him there remains the shield only, and the stomach! I made an ascent of Slieve Donard. All this was after my ramble about the north coast to Ballyrock W., and Ballycastle, Fairhead, Cushendal, &c., East. The climax was Fairhead, a glorious place!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*September 14, 1895.*

My Archaeology<sup>2</sup>, minus the ritualistic connotation you grafted on it, served me well at Comber. I

<sup>1</sup> My work in County Down in 1893 had resulted in identification of the builders of St. German's, Peel, with the builders of Inch Abbey and Grey Abbey, Down (1195 circa). Affrica, who founded Grey Abbey, was daughter of Godred, king of Man (1154-1187).—J. Q.

<sup>2</sup> I had said his beard transformed him into an Archaeological Ritualist.

thoroughly did Grey Abbey: it is delicious. The Lancets at once suggested the common Cistercian origin of Grey and Peel. I sought the stone on Scrabbo Hill, and found it, not far off, in Ballyrogan Quarry. Six pieces in my bag await the examination of 'friend Quine.' I am sure he will be delighted. You see, we Archaeologists—but d——n you! You are not of the craft.

My nephew-in-law gave me Christina Rossetti's strange, but beautiful monody, which he said had sent him to sleep. A poetess hiding beneath a metaphysical veil was not for him; but bedad, sir! she does bravely for me. And you'll hear more of this. O Christina! Christina! d'ye hear me! 'Belave me if ye can!' I follow your shining garments through all the apokalyptic spheres. Good night, Christina darling!

And, do you know, I climbed Slieve Donard, and had another niece to my *feve*, an approved *camarade*. She made great strides in my affections, and is destined to be a friend of friends. Ah, Irwin dear, 'women is good when they *are* good,' yes, faith, they are.

Everlasting thanks for your two letters. The Colchester<sup>1</sup> one took the cake. 'Oh that I were there!' But you don't know Pearsall, nor his *in dulci iubilo*. Nay, sir, you are left outside, and this was emphatically 'borne in upon' me (Presbyterian intercourse not without profit?) at the Manse. My niece Dora, the married, played Mozart, Heller, Schubert; my niece Nelly, the unmarried, played Handel (much), Haydn, Schumann—played from

<sup>1</sup> I had written of its Boswell associations.

memory, and most accurately and sweetly. The husband is a good deal of a musician, strict in that, if not in dogma. It was he who accompanied his eldest son. The youth played (on the violin) Gluck, Schumann, (but also, *credite posteri!*) *La Traviata*. Here were amene conditions.

And now a word of gratitude for all you made me feel and know. It was a glorious time, and the beard has fallen.

Hugh's razor, Hugh's brush—your sowl to glory!  
*Cecidit barba me ipso tonsore.*

Hurrah!

TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

September 17, 1895.

Dear me! What's doin on you? See here! A vess from oul Milton, 'Smit with the love of sacred song,' *Paradise Lost*, iii. That'll do gran'. But another thing. How on earth is it that I have never been told of this testimonial? For the world I would not be excluded from any token of respect—nor

'Break the fair music that all Manxmen make  
To their great songstress.'

Therefore—let my name be added to the roll.

In Peel? Aye! At the Craig Malin. My goodness! how could I disturb daycent people at that hour of the night. I come wiss the Fenellar. Tired? Yiss wossi, and slep' till hafe-pass-nine. Wondherful young man that was yandhar. Aye, sarvin' lek the breakfuss lek. Waiters is it theer callin' them? Aw lek enough. And says he: 'Some people is

sayin'—'s books is immoral. Do you think them immoral?' Bless mee sowl! I was that tuk aback you wudn' belave! I wass though.

And I met C., and he was tellin' me that yandhar American woman has been doin' shockin' jeel<sup>1</sup> wiss us all. Aye C. gets off pretty well, he was sayin'. But ——— and the wife is gerrin it booseley<sup>2</sup>. . . And 'poor people can't allis be washin' themselves,' says C., and 'preparr'd to be receivin' company like such ones.'

Aye now! deed on C. And no more they can. It seems C. shut himself up, and told the wife to 'deny him' to any persons comin' botherin' 'excep' on business.' Think of that now!

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

*September 21, 1895.*

I think I see you on the top of Lhergy Grawe. The gossamers of vision must float around the rock. Catch some and play with them. Surrender yourself to some illusions. What are we but children? Only we don't quite believe in our toys, nor, indeed, can we live upon interludes. Solid fact? Well that's not far off. Meanwhile illusions, gossamers—keep yourself amused. In my life I have been so much alone, it cannot be helped. Where is the comrade? I never had one. The absolute self is far within, and no one can reach it. I will not cant, but God reaches it, and He only. I used to envy the surface people, obviously happy, and in their happiness *all there*, so to speak,

<sup>1</sup> The word is used of things in a bad way or plight, I gather.

<sup>2</sup> Boosely = beastly.



the full complete presence of one being to another—no, it is not for men of a certain temperament. Yet we love candour, sincerity, thoroughness, and would fain saturate ourselves with free communication. Poor old Emerson and his over and under soul, he was not far wrong. His friend Carlyle broke down the division habitually—smashed the two souls into one great smudge of discontent. I would not do this. Keep them both going separately. A strong man has strength enough to do this, and all his surroundings benefit thereby. Moreover, in a sweet ancillary way they reflect upon us their sunshine. Or would you rather tear out the very *ἐντεφα* of the real man, and try to be the ordinary social ‘critter’ of the period? You can’t, you can’t! that ruin within you would have to be dragged about. . . .

Pay every attention to the outer soul; cultivate it and relate it harmoniously, if superficially, with others, or it will fret and work in troublesome counteraction. The great *kick* is within though, where gestation abides, and the quieter you keep that the better. . . .

Blackberries? Aye! picked nine quarts yesterday up Glenshuggyl—‘me and mee daughter Dora’—and betwix’ Ballaugh Glen and Sulby Glen, aback of Ballacubragh on the mountains, springy heather and *goss* to tickle ye as ye ‘stramp’ along. Oh the joy of it! But what’s the gud o’ talkin’?

TO MISS N. BROWN.

September 28, 1895.

The Burroughs is charming. I have not yet come to *your favourite*, but all is very good.

What a boom of sunshine! It is quite glorious. The air full of gold-dust and calm! no distant views, of course; no Scawfell eastward, no Slieve Donard westward: but some ten miles diameter of a bell-like purity.

I have been up Snaefell by the electric tram. I started from Laxey late, hoping to surprise a sunset. You need not mention it but I was the only passenger! The world was all steel-grey, rigid, immovable, just an outline, no body or substance, severely neutral colour, if you could call it colour. But it was rather grand. Pure form can do that.

Granite is the great thing about Slieve Donard. It is a noble *mountain accent*. (Please *not* ASCENT.) But it was horrible your losing the brooch. . . . And now Slieve Donard holds that secret, and I shall always think of it whenever I see the cruel peak go up from the horizon.

Your tobacco (yours or D.'s or *both's*) has lasted me till now. And behold! I am leaving off tobacco for a while, possibly for good. My success with the beard-cutting has given me an appetite for enterprise and experiment.

It is perfectly refreshing to hear of your fresh cuts into the Waverley cake. Curiously enough I have lately met with people a great deal older than you who have lots of Scott yet to read.

*The Fortunes of Nigel*, for instance. Fancy having that *before one* still! Fancy dying without having read it! 'going into the presence of your maker' and being compelled to such a confession! You can't do better than preoccupy your M. with

these wholesome and delicious things. The present taste is, probably, a mere craze, and will be transient. When she grows up, the swinish crew will have grunted their way down a very steep place, and she will be in the possession of the imperishable, or, rather, it will be in possession of her. God grant that this may be so! A bad look-out for the twentieth century, if we are to go on at this rate. But the nineteenth has produced magnificent fruit, and I am certain that it will never be lost to the world.

Comber is a place to think of!

— seems very happy. . . . A little explosive, though. More perfect serenity would indicate a deeper current of joy. Yet do I really prefer serenity? Perhaps not: but I value it in others, and am inclined to congratulate them on the possession. The serenity of mere placid *ben-jean*<sup>1</sup> is not what I have in mind: but the serenity that comes of struggle finished, the equilibrium of great contending forces, victory achieved over self. Yet we are such 'fluid' critturs, easily disturbed. And who would care to stiffen his innards into iron girders? The rennet is yet to be found that will reduce us to consistency and a 'shape'!

I will shut myself up here and compel some of you to cross over and see whether I am yet alive. You have already promised. And next April is the time, and I shall issue orders to the primroses and other liege subjects to prepare the ways for your approach. The 'felon winds,' too, I must confine, and arrange that balmy gales shall waft you Mona-wards. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Manx for elementary junket—curds and whey.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

October 3, 1895.

After all, when I next go to Ireland, I shall go straight to Ballycastle, and I shall lay siege to Fair Head—a leaguer of say a fortnight; and ‘belave me if ye can!’ I shall not go near the Causeway. There now! I wish to emphasize that. The dreadful scientific suggestions which underlie the ‘phenomenon,’ *lusus naturae*, *monstrum horrendum*, or whatever we agree to call it, will be quite enough to make me give it a wide berth. And, positively, it has no pretensions whatever to a comparison with the *Pulchrum Promontorium*, qua *pulchrum*. I shall some day sing the glories of that supreme elevation—you’ll see, lave me alone!

Now here is a strange story. What d’ye think? Having mastered the beard, I have gone on, not exactly to perfection, but to the disuse of tobacco. Follow your leader! ‘Come, if you dare!’ I am on an eminence of ecstatic morality, a pinnacle of the temple. Sir, I challenge you, over and up! The stylite position I maintain not without occasional *lapsus*. What would you have? Yesterday, for instance, I will admit that, Quine *interpellante*, I slipt down a foot or two. He had come to see me about his book, and a tantalizing communication he had had from Bentley. Of course there was no choice, and we smoked hard, shaping the fumes into forms of conjecture and consolation. The day before, too, I regret to say that my other literary *alumnus*, Mr. Rydings of Laxey, had been with me; and he also

needed comfort and the divinations of the 'cloudy pillar' which in this Sinaitic solitude is granted to perplexed pilgrims! So that was a pity, was it not? But I am very resolute, and have already recovered the topmost plinth, nay, am prepared to pelt you from my vantage (you know your Mat.<sup>1</sup>, does he say anything of St. Simeon making reprisals upon the mob below?) with such fragments as I may, I, the beard-queller.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 4, 1895.

*Ars Poetica* 99. W.'s difficulty illustrates the danger of reading a modern controversy into Horace. There is no question here of *Morality in Art*. It is not enough for a poem to be beautiful, it must also be *dulce*. What he means by *dulce* is shown by the context *si curat (tetigisse)*. I would not go so far, as with you, to include *hope or comfort* in the connotation. Perhaps *pathos* is enough.

I agree with W. in regarding Horace's criticism here as elementary, though not precisely as he paraphrases it. He would like to coax Horace out into the modern field—bribe him by indicating its largeness, its depth, its moral importance. No go! The little man stares civilly, and passes on. If he says anything, it is 'my dear young friend, you take me too seriously. I preach with your George Eliot, your Richardson, your Thackeray! *Di melius!* But if some of us went after him and explained, I dare say

<sup>1</sup> A slip? or is it my ignorance?

we should find him rather strong on that word *moral*. He would very likely declare the word, as we use it, a clumsy and ambiguous one. In fact, with Horace, the modern controversy does not emerge. The word *μαρὸν* is the very centre of it. To Horace as critic, human actions and passions would not appear as *μαρὰ*, or the opposite; to Horace as *judex* (jurymen, what you like) the distinction would be very clearly present. To us moderns, that distinction absorbs almost everything. That is, I suppose, because we *are* jurymen, not critics.

In reading Horace I should be inclined not to twist him into modernity. He is no prophet, but the genius of common sense. That is always in season.

The beloved Wordsworth and poetic diction. In a thousand sweet and noble lines he neglects his unfortunate theories. In *The Excursion* it is almost laughable; but we are the gainers. So let us say nothing, except some goose hisses and gives Wordsworth for his authority. Poetic diction is now raised beyond all possibility of attack.

Here is a sonnet I wrote the other day (a tolerably lax one!):—

#### WORDSWORTHIAN TITLE.

Sonnet sent to Hugh Arnold Stowell, second son of Ernest Stowell, Esq., of the Grammar School, Carlisle, to whom the author became godfather on the occasion of his christening at Ramsey, Isle of Man, being compelled to do so by proxy in consequence of an engagement to travel in Ireland with his friend, Sidney T. Irwin, Esq., author of &c., &c., with

a silver spoon in handsome velvet case. The author may here add . . . the whole genealogy of the Stowell-Brown family.

A gift, Hugh Arnold, from an aged man  
Accept. No stranger is he, with whose blood  
Was mixed your own well, later than the Flood,  
If not B.C., at least atavian,  
As figured in th' High-Bailiff's<sup>1</sup> laboured plan  
Heraldic, genealogical, O Lud!  
How fair the flower will be from such a bud,  
Dear child, whose future we so proudly scan!  
Brown, Stowell, what omens wait upon the names  
We know not, nor the Gallic<sup>2</sup> confluence  
We know, to ortho- or to auto-doxy  
How urged, if straight or devious, intense,  
Or, haply, lost amid the Keltic *dhramas*  
That soothed your loving godfather by proxy.  
T. E. B.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 6, 1895.

Can you help me? I am puzzled about Quarles. I have two editions, (1) 1736, illustrators not named; (2) 1861, illustrators, C. Bennet and W. H. Rogers. No. 2 is an *édition de luxe*, but the illustrations are very different from those in No. 1. It surely was not

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Arnold's grandfather, P. C. La Mothe, Esq., High Bailiff of Ramsey, who has recently compiled a pedigree of his family.—T.E.B.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Ernest Stowell, née La Mothe, of French origin therefore.—T.E.B.

allowable to change them so. What I want to know is how long the illustrations remained fixed. The Emblems were first published in 1635. Cuts by Marshall and Simpson. In 1696 Gillyflower's edition is mentioned in Lowndes as having 'all the cuts newly illustrated.' Was this the beginning of divergence? Also, how about the Emblems of Hermann Hugo? Many of Quarles' are said to have been borrowed from Hugo. Were the cuts borrowed as well? Please consult George, and Rowley.

Sure it's not for nothing that Rowley<sup>1</sup>,  
Hibernice's rhyming with *βουλή*;  
And a ray from the *Georgium sidus*<sup>2</sup>  
Might be haply forthcoming to guide us!

Ste. Beuve has three delightful *causeries* on Cowper. Do you know them? He gives several bits translated into French.

Dans un chemin mystérieux  
L'Esprit de Dieu voyage  
Sur les flots, dans l'ombre des cieux,  
Tout voilé par l'orage.

Do you recognize? This is by Madam Langlais. Much better, however, are Ste. Beuve's own translations in prose: 'La Rose avait été mouillée, à l'instant même mouillée par la pluie, cette Rose que Marie allait offrir à Anna,' &c.

Tes aiguilles, toute une collection brillante,  
Infatigable jusqu'à présent pour moi, maintenant  
Se rouillent inutiles et ne brillent plus,  
Ma Marie!

'Les visites de nuit que tu faisais dans ma chambre

<sup>1</sup> Professor Rowley, of University College, Bristol, is here rhymed 'out of his name.'

<sup>2</sup> 'William George's Sons,' the well-known Bristol booksellers.



pour savoir si j'étais sain et sauf et chaudement couché; tes largesses de matin avant le départ pour l'école, le biscuit ou la prune confite; l'eau odorante que ta main prodiguait à mes joues,' &c. And best of all 'Arrête, Gilpin; te voilà arrivé! lui crie-t-elle tout d'une haleine; le dîner attend, et nous sommes fatigués!'—'Et moi aussi!' dit Gilpin.

I think Ste. Beuve understood Cowper marvellously. But you must be *cussin*.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 13, 1895.

Didn't we talk about Fitzgerald's Letters when we were in Ireland? It appears that I only knew the series to Mrs. Kemble, now being published in *Temple Bar*. . . . The letters to Mrs. Kemble are delicious. They are full of the Crabbe—shall we call it Craze? I am certain I told you about that.

I would strongly advise you to read everything Fitzgerald has said about the beloved old crustacean. By-the-by, do you think of him as Crabbe fish or Crabbe apple? There is an ἡθος in Fitzgerald's letters which is so exquisitely idyllic as to be almost heavenly. He takes you with him, exactly accommodating his pace to yours, walks through meadows so tranquil, and yet abounding in the most delicate surprises. And these surprises seem so familiar, just as if they had originated with yourself. What delicious blending! What a perfect interweft of thought and diction! What a *sweet* companion!

And some of this *sapor* you find——. No, no! I love him, and there must be some sympathy; but the ethic grace—ah, Irwin! There he is supreme, and better men than I may well uncover before this ‘mystery of godliness.’ I have no other name for it.

The lovely *perturbatio* of the dear old scholar as regards S.’s treatment of Crabbe, the *depth* of an indignation which moves his gentle soul to something like a holy ferocity; yet the respect, the forbearance, the quiet questioning of his own claims in the presence of those which he recognizes in the ability and acumen of the younger critic ——. Oh, it is nectar! I do love him; yes, more even than Crabbe. It seems so deep in him. I hardly think he could give the reasons for the impatience he feels, the divine impatience. There, I confess I stand by his side; and I would counsel every one who undertakes Crabbe as a subject to pause and give all possible weight to the condition which has been induced in so fine a nature by what must have been *felt* by him to be the inadequacy—he would not say, and I would not say—the impertinence, the flippancy of S.

Look at him, he is speechless; but his eye flashes, his bosom heaves, his whole being protests, and we must take into account the fact, the *διάθεσις*. He stands before the shrine, stands, perhaps, for ever silent, mutely demanding your credentials. Where’s your *σύμβολον*? Search in your pocket, search in your heart.

It is very hard to make out where we differ about Horace and the gliding into the modern groove.

Probably we do not differ. I merely object to the slightest modern qualification of *morata*. Horace would never have imagined that a *fabula* ought to set forth the triumph of right over wrong, or any copy-head commonplace of the modern Christian moralist, who is essentially a preacher. Enough for Horace if the *mores* were consistent, however abominable. And poems

Presenting Thebes or Pelops' line,  
Or the fall of Troy divine,

could hardly fail to suggest the sinful and the base.

Or what (though rare) of later age  
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

Imagine him reading *Othello*, or, for the matter of that, Aristophanes, whom of course he did read, with disapprobation? Surely not. But undoubtedly we are groping about and conjuring up differences.

Your account of the silver-wedding is like a fairy tale, X. the benevolent fairy! How you must have enjoyed it!

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

October 20, 1895.

Ever welcome! Very welcome this sweet October day. The sun is all molten down upon us, and yet there is no sunshine. So like the time we rambled on the hills here. You remember the conjectured ghosts of hills, and the brooding, and the steeping, and the softness, and the embrace, and voices as in

dreams, and the general atmosphere of cows and halcyons?

I have been in Ireland, I think you know. It was very good, and I shall go again. Ballycastle and Fair Head were delicious. The two tarns on the Head, high up. There they are on the flat. From the sea face, perpendicular, this must be the effect.



That V-shaped break is the thing. Sit just there and look down. There is something beyond measure pathetic in the *εὐθανασία* of that little stream. Only



a few yards, and it is born to die, and dies so gloriously, yet so quietly. Rathlin too is just opposite. I believe they get their letters by pigeon-post. Oh for the wings of a dove!

Your telepathy—well, by conscious effort, and by setting fixed times and cultivating the habit, Heaven knows what might be done. But our poor machinery of pen and ink and paper has its merit. So do let us ‘use the manes’! What are you writing, saying, thinking? That we are contemporaries is not without

its solace. Two molluscs are like that : but I believe most of them have tentacula, and reach with some sort of yearning. That native *nisus* of limpet clinging to the rock barely suffices them, except they be of the most primitive order, holding on by suction to an area exactly limited to their size and shape. I confess there is a good deal of that about me. Solidarity with this globe, daedal or not daedal, makes me happy enough. But I fear the happiness is just a bit selfish, and if it had sufficed me I should never have gone to Ireland, nor should I have felt the other day a mysterious stirring within me when I read upon a poster : ' To London and back for 19s. 6d.!! ' I was all but off, and that would have landed me at Haslemere !

I lectured at Laxey last Thursday, the audience very attentive and sympathetic. Leader of the *claque* was a dear little fiery Scotchman, such an enthusiast, all dripping with Keltic frenzy like a dog just emerged from a pool, and shaking himself in a halo of rapture. These chaps' souls are made of volcanic spray. He was at the Burns dinner in Douglas, where I spoke last January. He won't believe that I'm not Scotch. It seems they reproduced my address in a Dumfries paper. So, in that part of Scotland at any rate, I am adopted of the *perfer-vidum genus*, and I shall claim the *civitas* some day. Galloway is Scotch enough, is it not ? My forbears came from Jedburgh, and the great Waverley country draws me forcibly. But, glorious as it is, it is so terribly overlaid by cockney ordures that I am fain to take refuge in the Wast. It is so far away from

everything and everybody, and my dear 'Old John' came from there.

A sort of *apologia pro vita mea, pro poematibus, historiis, nugis, iocis*, was the subject of my discourse. 'Makin' fun of the Manx'—that is the charge. Satire, lampoon, caricature—I went in for the whole bilin', bless ye! a regular scientific analysis of the Momus business. And then I read them one of Rydings' stories. What I wanted, in fact, was to justify the excellent R. rather than myself. You have not seen his Manx stories? I must send you a copy. He is a Lancashire man, and having lived here some thirty years, is 'Manxer till the Manx,' really a miracle of dialectic assimilation. He is a friend of Ruskin's; has charge of St. George's mill at Laxey, under the St. George's Guild, and the sanction of the great J. R.

Ruskin was primarily interested in our mountain handloom weavers. But he started this mill, a powerloom concern. Obviously it has no tendency to encourage, but rather to kill off, the poor old things with their primitive domestic industry. To a certain extent it may promote the spinning by the farmers' wives of their own wool; the spinning-wheel, observe, not the handloom. And indeed spinning-wheels are getting rare.

Still there are a few of the old weavers lingering about in the most unexpected places. A whole family of them in a very out-of-the-way part of Kirk Andreas. Fred. La Mothe, formerly the curate there, introduced me.

There survived the mother and one son. The

father and two other sons had died of consumption; they had all been weavers, hereditary weavers. One poor lad is left. In the little weaving place are two seats at the *Weberstuhl*, worn and polished and hollowed by long use. He pointed to the other seat, and said he was now alone. A handsome youth, not more than twenty-three, and visibly signed with the same seal—the crimson hectic flush, the bright but not unearthly eyes, the automatic smile. Such a gentle, sweet creature! He has no thought of death. How is it kept from them? The mother thinks of it, though. Tall, stately, with the remains of peerless beauty, she knew all about it.

Her love for her son was only equalled by her love for F., and a lovable creature he is. It was more than love, it was worship, as she clung to his hand (*ἐν δ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ*) and devoured him with insatiable eyes. Tremendous! to have won that love, to have won it by simple kindness and humanity.

Indeed, music is here my greatest lack, though the Manx are a musical people. I fear I am sophisticate. England has done that. Of dormice, it must needs be that some are just beginning their hibernation. I have not forgotten.

In the next *New Review* I believe you will see my 'Job the White.' You remember, I always had that thing running in my brain. I wonder how you'll like it. Tell me! I wrote it about this time last year. The 'Roman Women' appeared in the same *Review* some time in summer. I have got some *κῶδος* for it, otherwise I do little. I am become a great contributor of occasional verses, on bazaars!

On October 31 I open a bazaar in Douglas!! This fairly takes my breath away! Do you see me? However, my beard has gone, so I'm all right.

I will tell you in my next letter about another weaver and his wife, a most splendid discovery.

Please remember me most kindly to my Godson when you write to him next. I have a new Godson (proxy). I sent him a sonnet and a spoon the other day.

Now best love to Maggie and all who love me.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 1, 1895.

I return you your *Big School*<sup>1</sup>. You aim at your hearers, manifestly desiring to reach them. Don't you think that makes a great difference? To be thinking about oneself and the *δόξα* is one thing, to be thinking about one's hearers and how to get at them is another. Of course it is not enough to hammer at their understandings. I suppose that gives 'clarity.' We must also give pleasure; no *πειθώ* without *ἡδονή*. And the *ἡδονή* reflects upon ourselves. But the faintest smirk of self-satisfaction alienates the hearer. How I stand, how I appear, how clever I am, how awfully cute, how preternaturally witty—these things must be relegated to the innermost adytum of consciousness. I don't believe for a moment we can get rid of them,

<sup>1</sup> An address given in the 'Big School,' Clifton College.



‘absolutely’ expunge them. If we could, the *concio* would be such a happy function, no effort, all grace, free movement, and charm.

I only wish the local colour was not so unmistakable as to render the essay unsuitable for general reading. This can’t be helped. Of course, it arises from that very quality of directness, singleness of aim, oneness of desire, which I welcome with delight. Addresses of this kind will not do anywhere else; oddly enough, when you think of it, not for other schools. The young demons are such monopolists, shall I say, Epicures? They want the very best, and they will have nothing else. You furnish a table at which all mankind might sit as well as they, but they will tolerate no commensals. It is a fearful waste as regards both quantity and quality. But there is no help for it. These dreadful young persons do not really eat one-half of what is laid before them; but they will not let it go forth to serve a second table. Well, I don’t complain, nor, I imagine, do you. They are the *γένεσις* as well as the *τέλος*; they create the situation, and unconsciously stimulate your energy. But such Persic apparatus! ‘the young barbarians’!

This is disturbing about Greek, ‘set’<sup>1</sup> Greek. Yes, you would fill the school to overflowing, of course you would, as long as other places did not abandon the old lines. But it would be detestable treachery to the cause of education, of humanity. To me the *learning* of any blessed thing is a matter of little

<sup>1</sup> The question raised was whether Greek should be outside the ordinary Form-routine—taught in ‘sets’ and not as a Form-subject.

moment. Greek is not *learned* by nineteenth-twentieths of our Public School boys. But it is a baptism into a cult, a faith, not more irrational than other faiths or cults; the baptism of a regeneration which releases us from I know not what original sin. And if a man does not see that, he is a fool, such a fool that I shouldn't wonder if he gravely asked me to explain what I mean by original sin in such a connexion.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 10, 1895.

*The 'one thing'*<sup>1</sup> did indeed please. Also one wishes one had discovered it oneself—that is a very exquisite form of envy!!

In the quotation—

And thinks, committed to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company,

how delicious is the 'equal'! Of which the pathos is purely literary, not moral. And what is the exact ground of the pathos? Is it not the consciousness that by using this classical form of speech we tread in sacred footsteps, that all the ages are one, 'linked each to each by natural piety,' that it appeals to scholars like a masonic symbol, reminding us that we are a brotherhood: yes, more than masonic, a true *φρατρία*. I dare not press into theological precincts; but infinitely remote as are the two spheres from each

<sup>1</sup> An adaptation of the quotation that follows.

other, why should we refuse to perceive an analogy q.d., 'one in Horace,' 'one in Homer,' &c. = 'one in Christ'? I assure you that the sweetness of the thought as it emerges in the classical field helps me a good deal to understand the depth and sincerity of what might, otherwise, be to me a vacuous languor as it stands in the theological field, and is associated with the term, 'Oneness in Christ.'

Well, then, if this be so, who shall rob us of so noble a joy? and what class of men are to be denied it? The Humanities—precisely, there you are. Oh, do give people a chance! Be it by adopting the method recommended by a 'Gentleman of Bristol<sup>1</sup>,' teach better, and cut down the subjects. The gross fallacy of 'useful subjects' must be exploded as a horror.

I have not had any reply to my last letter to Z. Very likely I have offended him, and I did it maliciously and with subtlety. What 'bein's' we are! I'm thinking of myself, not him. Why should I deliberately aim at hurting him? and he is so perfect a friend. I suppose every man likes to scratch and bite once in a way. But it is childish, and you don't know what harm you may be doing. Nor does it avail to plead, 'It was so clever; I thought, after all, he'd be pleased.' Nonsense! No man is pleased at the protruded nail; the mere gesture is an ugly one, and the entrance into your flesh is certainly painful, and may be insulting. So I school myself, but find it hard to practise my own rules. In all things I am my own most incorrigible pupil.

<sup>1</sup> In an eighteenth century pamphlet I had told him of.

## TO MISS KATHLEEN RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

*November 22, 1895.*

I am so glad you like the books.

The snake Hydra, some people say, had seven heads, some say it had nine, some fifty, some a hundred; so that's a pretty kettle of fish, or, at least, of snake, that is Hydra or water-snake!

The two-headed dog that guarded Geryon's cows was called *Orthrus*, that is *upright*, because he always stood upright, and kept his four eyes upon the cows.

That is quite right about Ariadne. The wine-god married her, took her up to heaven, and placed the crown he gave her at the wedding among the stars. A very pretty story too. It is now a beautiful bright star, and you can see it on a fine night as bright and as beautiful as ever. Think of that now! Hercules had twelve labours, or tasks to do. But he had another which is not generally mentioned. Being a great traveller, he once came to the Isle of Man, and, wandering up Glen Roy, he met a big cat, and had a fight with him. They fought near St. Patrick's Well. The cat was what is called a Bull-cat, and had an enormous and very strong tail. This tail he twisted round and round poor Hercules, and they rolled together right down into the river. There Hercules drew his sword, and cut off the cat's tail, and all the young ones of this cat are still without tails! Wonderful, is it not?

Music and drawing are very delightful; but sums and spelling are useful. Don't neglect them. And

your nice letter is so well written and spelt that I hardly think you do.

Remember me very kindly to your father and mother.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

November 27, 1895.

. . . . .  
I grow old naturally, comfortably, easily, and with assent and consent. Very well. It is the strugglers, the rebels, the miserables who can do nothing generously, that spoil themselves, throwing away a lot of vital energy in sulks, and starts, and recalcitrations. Am I wrong in this *bona fides* of living, tearing no passion to rags, kicking against no bars? I have seen bars looming occasionally, but I treat them as atmospheric effects. And that may, perhaps, be the reason why I have not read Balfour's book, and, indeed, give all such books a wide berth. These matters I defer to larger, or, it may be, narrower fields; in short, practically, to the Greek Kalends. I have no taste for them, and recognize no responsibility. . . .

Kindest love to you all from us all.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 23, 1895.

The most fastidious Antiochian might feel for me in my endeavours to carry out his aesthetic requirements. Unfortunately no use or wont will ever reconcile me to my fate, and every morning I am in

doubt whether to apply the razor to my beard or my weazand. It is an awful tyranny; you exercise it unconsciously; otherwise, God forgive you!

You ask me for my sonnet on the Governor's departure. I think I can remember it, though I have no copy. The printer left out a line (!), and consequently I had for a while to submit to the imputation of having written a thirteen-lined sonnet! which would have been worse than my other sufficiently perilous flights in the sonnet direction. Verily I am unfortunate with the *forma astrictissima*. Better take to ballads and be done with it! well, here goes:—

‘Sonnet on the occasion of Sir Jos. West Ridgeway's being transferred from the government of the Isle of Man to that of Ceylon, and identifying his last public appearance with the distribution of prizes to the Local Volunteer Company, the proceedings forming a conspicuous feature of the Bazaar held in Douglas on behalf of the New St. Matthew's Church Building Fund, October 29–31; of which days the last was distinguished by this interesting ceremonial, and the Bazaar was opened by the Rev. T. E. Brown (the author).’ [I flatter myself ‘old Wordsworth’ is not in it. In it? well, yes, but only by way of quotation in the sonnet]:—

A stainless sword, Ceylon, we give to thee,  
Jewelled with gems as precious as thine own,  
Faith, wisdom, loyalty, to guard the throne  
Of her who ‘holds the gorgeous East in fee,’  
But well content to rule the strong and free.

Such Mona's sons. To us it was a loan  
 Short-dated, soon reclaimed. Two years have  
     flown,  
 And the fine lustre flashes. What are we?  
 Soldier and statesman, soldier-citizens  
 Surround you still, and at your hands receive  
 The merited guerdon. Hear the People's voice,  
 Far-echoing from the mountains and the glens;  
 God speed you, Ridgeway, for, albeit we grieve,  
 Yet for the Empire's sake we will rejoice.

Is it stately enough? ceremonious? 'poetic diction'?  
 All right?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

December 8, 1895.

My stiles will soon facilitate the cliff ramble from Peel to Glen May. I have had an estimate and given the order. Peel will have to enroll me as a benefactor to the town, perhaps as a *deus semitalis*, erecting to me a statue as among her ἐνόδιοι.

I wish I could send you some sense. Here is my father's hymn: before rejecting it, would you mind your cousin and your sister and your *old servant* seeing it? It is not without faults, but the intention throughout is classical. You know how hard it was to suppress that in the Evangelical exercises, the dear old *patres*:—

Clouds unnumbered hues displaying  
 Skirt no more the western sky;  
 Pensive twilight, long delaying,  
     Now at length eludes the eye.

Silence that of Death resembling  
Reigns all o'er the scene around,  
Save where wind-swept woods are trembling,  
Save where Ocean's waves rebound.

Thanks to Thee for every blessing,  
Thee to whom the hosts above  
Songs of praise are still addressing,  
Fount of Goodness, God of Love!

Should we be by Death o'ertaken  
Ere the morn dispels the shade,  
Gladly be this world forsaken,  
Gladly be Thy call obeyed.

By celestial guards attended,  
May we seek Thy glorious throne,  
Dwell where Day is never ended,  
Live where Night is never known.

I dare say I have sent the verses to you before. If so, pardon the officious piety. Just now I feel these things and thoughts pressing closely on me. You too no doubt have some of these 'Father' days. They are inexpressibly sweet, but the vagueness of our modern beliefs makes them yearn out into a vortiginous emptiness. Sick at heart! sick at heart!

TO MISS N. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

December 9, 1895.

I cannot give up *Nigel* to you. So much depends on what sort of novel you like. For instance, many people don't care for the historical novel. I am not over-spooney on them myself. But I am, historically, interested in James I, and I take Scott's portrait of him to be a masterpiece. Then, historically again, the Sanctuary, and the rights of sanctuary, at



Westminster—the bullies and bravos of ‘Alsatia’—what a picture of social or, rather, anti-social conditions, of London life before the Civil War! No one to love, to like, to respect—quite true. But do you want that in a novel? We want men to be alive *and* kicking: we can do with a lot of kicking, and, if the kicking is against the ‘pricks’ of the Decalogue, what for no? I don’t read a novel for edification.

*The Talisman*—that’s odd. It is the first ‘Waverley’ I ever read, and, if for that reason alone, must always be dear. Stronger lights and richer colours have been at work since, but they have not removed the delightful impression. Every one who cares about what men can be and do will love some sort of Cœur-de-Lion or another. And Sir Walter has done him to perfection. It does not matter about historical accuracy. ‘I thought that that was what you attached importance to,’ I think I hear you say. Well, no! but what I value is the power to set up a character, give it prominence, strength, and point. Then go at it, all you young-uns! Knock it about! Use it as a football, if you like. Henceforth Cœur-de-Lion is a creature, a big creature, and you’ll not ignore him. Sir Walter has made mistakes: yes, but there is no mistake about this, and he has opened your mind, and given you the historical impulse! Now, go a-head!

I have read Burroughs with great satisfaction. The man is a genuine naturalist, with a sweet and wholesome enthusiasm, and no bad style. I have to thank you for a great treat. I suppose one needs a bit of a change from the blessed old White. But

was there ever a sincerer man, or one who, considering his love for the marvellous, held closer to the truth? Nothing could induce him to exaggerate; even his style is free from the faintest tinge of pretentiousness. The grand honest old soul! Naturalists, good ones, are great favourites of mine. Waterton, you might imagine, liked a pull at the long bow, but we are told he was all right, and that his stories are not the less true for being so amusing. Certainly his style is a very suitable one, quaint and racy.

And to all these things your M. is now coming on. Her talent for drawing will stand her in good stead. If she is fond of Natural History, what a field she has before her! The beasts and the birds alone will be splendid subjects. Let her draw them (in colours, if you approve, it bribes the beginner at any rate) at first from books, but afterwards, and not so very long afterwards, from Nature. The Zoological Gardens would, in this way, become a charming studio.

As children, my brother Harry and I illustrated history at a great rate. We hung the walls of our bedroom with these pictures, Greek, Roman, English history. They would have been better for some lessons in drawing (freehand or other), and also for some special instruction in anatomy and the figure. But they did really impress upon us history in a wonderful degree. I remember your grandfather being brought into the room to see these productions. He was a very reserved person, I believe you know. He said nothing, that is, to us. Mothers are more outspoken. How much we owe to ours! When

we left the Vicarage, I was away at school. Very likely, if I had been at home, I should have done nothing to save these triumphs of art! At that time of life one does not think of these things and of their possible future value to the family circle, sufficiently busied about its own contemporary history and provisions for ordinary daily wants. There was mighty tearing up, pulling down, and burning. Your father was by universal consent appointed to this function, and I am bound to say he discharged it with great thoroughness and impartiality. I still see the holocaust in the back garden flaming up to heaven, and our brave Hugh, loaded with MSS. and God knows what, logically proceeding to the grim end!

This youthful inquisitor was then just twenty-three! Can you *picture him*? Ah the glorious twenty-three! But I must not dwell on that. Within the year the house was pulled down, and that I think is when our historical gallery, like Shakespeare's 'golden lads and lasses,' 'came to dust.' When you come in the spring we must devote a day to Kirk Braddan. I want you to realize how much of your father came from that spot, that life, almost unconsciously to himself. I believe I could have done that part of the biography better than either biographer or autobiographer. I may yet return to it somewhere. But you come and have a look and a *dream*. These things want a bit of dreaming. Without some such preliminary, you don't get the atmosphere, and your crags of fact stand up in a gaunt nakedness which implies exaggeration. I don't want to substitute a dream for a series of facts. Let us handle them carefully, scrupulously. But I

demand the preliminary dream, which is a kind of vital intoxication, a rapture, if you like. And to get it, you must come to Braddan. I could help you there, no doubt; but I positively think you had *better be alone*, taking with you some brief directions, notes, what-not, from me. At any rate, if I go, we two must go alone. You can easily explain this to your companions. They will understand. You see the pilgrimage will be, and ought to be, and can be, a sacramental function between you and me. And when I say 'it can be,' what I mean is that when we walked in Co. Down the other day, I saw that for a certainty you were capable of these sacramental silences, and can drink them in, few words being spoken. Love to M.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*December 15, 1895.*

You excellent man! From the hurly-burly to send such a letter, so cheering. Dear old Noah 'flew a pigeon' from the Ark. I dare say he suffered rather from distractions (all the critters, we may suppose, were not well-behaved); but from such a veritable Gehenna as 'Examination' to dispatch a messenger with the feathers unsinged was a record.

Have you seen Mat. Arnold's *Letters*? I hear of a *Penny Mat. Arnold* published by *Stead* (!!). Is that possible? And to be followed by a *Penny Clough*! Did you ever? Is he publishing them in penny numbers? the whole to cost a lot? Or, posi-

tively, can we have Mat.—the whole unmutilated Mat.—for a penny? And by STEAD? Wonders will never cease. Fancy Mat., from that fair heaven which now holds his dainty ghost, stooping to sniff at this *κνίσση*! *sniff at*—sniff is ambiguous, is it not? It is to be observed that men like Mat. have an odd way of generating bastards. On some raid into Philistia he must have captured a Dalilah and taken her to his tent. And this is characteristic of our time; the frontiers get blurred, our choicest and best, whose very defects, if they be defects, we might have imagined would save them from such unions, are occasionally to be seen surrounded by hangers-on, who are absolutely unworthy. What is it? Some kindly looseness in the great man? or merely impudence in the small one? However this may be, I never can get a clear view of a modern writer, especially an eminent one, by reason of the admirers and imitators who are his own spurious offspring. What a *nimbus* for a celebrity! The old men are full-orbed, serene, ‘fixed in their everlasting seats.’ Now that is surely a glorious thing. There they are, the Classics. No one dreams of associating them with the feculent vulgar. No doubt we may impute a good deal of this ragamuffin salvage to the ‘spread of education,’ to the smug conviction which every man seems to cherish that he is in the secret, or that there is no secret. And the pestilent error is encouraged by the reduction of genius to ‘the infinite capacity of taking pains,’ by the insane idea that you can teach the ‘trick,’ that literature is a trade, a kapelistic art, that ‘the all is in us all,’ that there is no

intellectual hierarchy, that the venerable *Poeta nascitur non fit* is venerable bosh—and a thousand and one heresies of the same ‘mak.’ Hence it comes to pass that even a *εὐζωγος* like Mat. gets swaddled and swathed with these terrible integuments, the fine Greek limbs of him impeded by Barbarian *braccae*. Still one has the consolation of thinking that he must be amused when he beholds waving a censer in his temple such a high-priest as Stead—amused—yes, and note the shrinking nostril, how it curves!

Almost thou persuadest me to be an examiner—I find myself gliding quite obviously into the mood<sup>1</sup>. I am prepared to dive into question (1), and reappear with the pearl, ‘The moral of *The Princess*.’ It does not, however, lie at a specially unsoundable depth. More to my taste, and wholly magnificent, is question (9)<sup>2</sup>. This is a draught *de longue haleine*. Here I don’t want to be the examiner, but the examined. The question gives one such a shove, sends one over such fields. Is one a bee? Ah, the flowers! the flowers! *Couldn’t* I do that question? You trust me with it? it is a great compliment: *I suck the honey afar off*. N.B. Confusion, not ‘worse confounded,’ but still a nuisance: forgive!

The little hymn I sent you produced exactly the effect I had anticipated. To feel it, one has to go back, and place it in its period. I know it is a period you love. There is just this additional consideration.

<sup>1</sup> A paper on *The Princess* which I had sent him.

<sup>2</sup> ‘What should you say was the secret of success in the two great songs, “Blow, bugle, blow,” “Tears, idle tears”? Has any success of the same kind been achieved by other English poets?’

One has to remember how absolutely sound was the *bona fides* of these men. They were without self-consciousness, stretched back, in all guileless simplicity, to their models, and were *proudly, sedately humble*. We are so different. We have the art-perception, we catch flavours, and roll them on our tongues. And we are quite right; it is an enjoyment which they could not have had. But we have yet another opportunity, that of sympathizing with them in their very incompleteness, the Spartan tenuity of their *apparatus criticus*, the loyalty to what they were accustomed to regard as excellent, the unquestioning, childlike reverence for authority in literature: behind all which we may conjecture potentially, latent but unmistakable, a contemptuous impatience of new-fangled ways, and unprecedented metres. I wonder what they *thought*: and with this wonder I cease: I *may* wonder.

If melancholy sometimes creeps into my letters, pray do not imagine that I am melancholy. Melancholy is the overflow of everything, but, with me, only an overflow, not, however, of melancholy. You have heard of harmonics in music. Well, such are my melancholies. Strike any note, and listen attentively; you will hear the harmonic. It is part of ourselves—‘the electric chain wherewith we’re darkly bound’? Nonsense! Very good Byron, but very poor philosophy.

Now get to work at those papers.

Before I write again you will have got through all your ‘troubles.’ Even so! Amen.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*December 17, 1895.*

Keep this letter till the hurly-burly is over. It is important. Don't answer immediately! You can't! B. and H. emigrate. They have thought of Canada. But the accounts are not encouraging.

The lads are quite determined to work like niggers. There's no mistake about that. They will turn up their noses at nothing, so far as the operation has not as yet been anticipated by nature.

It dies away—over the hills! over the hills! the battle has staggered and reeled, and there is now a vast silence: I will not interrupt it.

What a fool of a world it is! No room, sir, no room whatsoever.

When you are quite recovered, wounds healed, fractures joined, write me a long letter.

TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

*December 23, 1895.*

Yiss, maam, I'd be glad to jine the Book Club.

. . . Poor Mr. —! I was down with them all yesterday, 'taking the jooty' and the lek o' yandhar. . . . I saw the broken leg: it's 'nicely bruck,' and in that 'slantin'' way that is most satisfactory for a good 'splice'—Dr. W. is in attendance—'Couldn be batthar.' . . . The children are so nice, so bright, and cheerful, and helpful. I told them they'd got 'some-thin' worth nussin' now,' and you should have seen



how happy they looked. M. and E. came home on Saturday. . . . That good soul had taken charge of them, given them tea and an enormous box of chocolates. And J. is good—min' yow that! . . . 'I b'liv' in mee sowl the man is good.' 'Aye,' says you, 'and jus because he gev the children the chocolates! Men is funny!' . . .

Fancy four weeks in splints and four weeks in plaster of Paris!! So they say; but, dear me heart! Surely four weeks altogether would do the healing job? But maybe it's like ——'s salvation—'Ye know ye navor know ye know.'

The attack in *The Saturday* was copied in *The Courier*. We are a poor lot! I repeat it—We, Manx, a poor, poor lot. We have a sneaking delight in seeing dirt cast at those of whom we ought to be proud.

You comfort me much by kind words of sympathy. I hope you don't often find me in a melancholic mood. But now and then I dare say I'm rather like an old cat, 'slickin' meeself with mee own slaver.' You've seen the like? You stroke them a bit, and they're pleased enough with that for a change. But on they go, slick, slick, slick, till the melancholy is gone, and behold ye! they're out in the bushes after them blackbirds, 'as bowl' as bowl'.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 1, 1896.

Every good wish and every perfect wish for your happiness in 1896.

We passed into the new year very sweetly, a transition of the gentlest. 'Some natural tears' were shed, but that was only a rain-shower about midnight. My folk were returning from the 'Watch' service in the church, and got rather wet—a not unkindly baptism.

I have had a letter from W. which I know you would like. 'The man's a man for a' that.' He had feared to find me 'a different Brown from the old Brown,' when he came over to visit me in August. The letter is a discourse on that text, and really a masterpiece, if there can be such a thing as a masterpiece of kindness and affection. He is an admirable guest, easy to be treated and entreated, loving and lovable, restful and acquiescent. The three days he had with us here were rubrics, and we thoroughly enjoyed them.

I have not seen the December *Nineteenth Century*, but I should hesitate to differ from Morley on the question of Gray's letters. Of course you are right in reserving the letters to West. I am unable to speak to the Byron letters. I suspect they would be found incommensurate with Cowper's, and am surprised that the comparison should have been instituted. The fineness of Cowper is a quality which could not be laid in the scale against the force of Byron.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 14, 1896.

I suppose you will be ready about April 15. Have you any special choice of route or locality? Almost all the country up there is equally well known to me.

I could sketch a week's or a fortnight's ramble approximately. Or shall we settle down in one place and *pirouette* (ah, *pirouette!* we two! a pencil! a pencil!) in leisurely fashion.

I wrote to X. about his trouble, and had a very brief, but touching reply. I know men who, passing through a sorrow like this, would *pass through*, and there an end. Of X. I think differently. He would not pass through it, nor would it pass through him. He would absorb it, and, absorbing, transmute it into untold sweetness—the dear old man, eupeptic in his very grief.

Sir, you don't take any notice of my 'Pastoral Care.' Two parishes (I have told you) depend on my vigilance; two congregations of 'hungry sheep look up and are not fed,' save with such orts as a very shabby divinity can supply. But, if they look up hungry, they look up kindly; I never saw such patient cheerful mortals. No doubt 'they're marching through Emmanuel's ground,' but some odds and ends of doctrinal turnips would not come in amiss. From me 'if aught of oaten stop or pastoral song' can obviate 'the rank mist they draw,' well and good. But I fear me much my 'lean and flashy songs' have an air of the 'scrannel pipe.'

TO E. RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

January 18, 1896.

. . . The 'Burns' folk have confided to my care the toast of 'Our adopted country,' meaning, I take it, the Isle of Man.

This is a great compliment—a real patent of naturalization. Henceforth I wear the kilt and spleuchan. Don't talk to me! What will Mr. McCaa think? The spring begins to stir in my old veins—hurrah!

PS.—I dare say you know that I am at present hovering, like some shabby old 'Angel of the Covenant,' over the 'spirituals' of two parishes twenty-eight miles apart, Bride, and St. Matthew's, Douglas. It's very nice, 'though.'

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 21, 1896.

By-the-bye I have just thought of a proof that Lord Byron pronounced the *h* in *wh* as I do, and not like you Southrons. 'Unhappy White, when life was in its spring,' &c. If he had not given the *h* its force, but pronounced *wite*, surely he must have felt he was 'colliding' with the archaic 'Unhappy wight.' Neat, I think, eh?

I have picked up old Mozley from the vasty deep, or, rather, we were both poking about, and have fished up each other. He sent me a photograph of the 'Sugar-loaf.' But I dare say I have already mentioned this, and also the verses he wrote on the back of the picture. Did I? At the risk of iteration here they are:—

Immemorem tu ne me credas illius horae,  
Te duce quum stabam praeruptae vertice rupis,  
Et convexa maris late prospeximus una.

I sent him in return one of the real 'Cowen'

beauties, a bit of interior Manx, without a suggestion of the sea. Did I send you one? (Bridge, cottage, stream, humble sort of mountain in background.) And here is the inscription—a tetrastich—(For that elegance my heaviness. For his gold, my——):—

Tu mihi praecipitem quo cingitur insula murum  
 Nostra refers, tibi ego quae loca blanda latent  
 Intus—agros, fontes, iuga vix tendentia caelo,  
 Caetera quae fugiunt murmura rauca maris.

*Idem Anglice redditum:—*

The girding cliff to view your picture brings,  
 Mine is an inland sketch of fount and lea,  
 And modest hills, and all the pleasant things  
 That shun the bluster of the roaring sea.

Trustrum, the landlord of the Port Erin Hotel (whom you will remember), sent me a beautiful Christmas card. I sent him the following, December 31, 1895:—

George Trustrum, ere the day be done,  
 I send a word to you.  
 Pale primrose marked the rising sun,  
 The setting bids adieu  
 In roseate veil to all the fears  
 And all the hopes of bygone years.  
 And I look back to joys long fled—  
 The boat, the yarn, the height  
 Of Bradda's crown; but you, instead,  
 Look forward with delight.  
 God bless you! may each sun that goes  
 Give you the primrose and the rose!

‘Sun that goes’ is rather feeble. But——, ‘however.’

I am quite ashamed of the stuff. ‘Correct me, but not with judgment!’

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 22, 1896.

About the MS.<sup>1</sup>, my *honest* opinion is that it is madness, which, indeed, it purports to be. I always approach this sort of thing with a strong prejudice. Tints and gleams of lurid splendour do not propitiate me, only irritate. The mere fact of the lunatic (supposed) having shaken off rhyme-shackles, to begin with, makes me uncomfortable. A Gadarene raving among the tombs—what's the good of it? Orpheus might have chanted it, but only after his

Gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

Or it might have had for its author 'the rout that made the hideous roar.' It *is* hideous! Let your bard recover his reason, and we'll talk to him. The insanity flashes in *Lear* are glorious, but sustained *ἔμεισις* of madness is, I think, abominable. Perhaps I am severe, and I admit that the rhapsody abounds in magnificent jets and sprays. Great throbs and spasms of a fine imagination are abundant and redundant therein. Why doesn't the man pull himself together? He could certainly write excellent verse if he liked. 'Clothed and in his right mind' he has the making of a brilliant style. As he is, anybody can do that sort of thing by merely letting himself go—down the swift Hebrus, or any other flood or cataract of nonsense.

<sup>1</sup> A poetical MS. submitted to him.

This is a lovely book—the Sidney; *mille gratias!* It has a very suggestive picture of Penshurst. That is an old dream of mine. I have such a longing to see the place, and dream one good long dream there. Hillard knows it and ministered some fuel to my passion. Could we not visit it together?

I am convinced that we might have an excellent time in the Home Counties some Easter Vacation. Milton's country, Gray's, Eton, Windsor, Burke's country, perhaps diverging into Cowper's. What think you? Not this Easter; we are to meet in 'the Lakes.' But say next year. It is rash, perhaps, to be speculating on a '97 or a '98. But such speculations are almost as delightful as the realities, and do no one any harm. I could write something which might supply the funds beforehand; and something more afterwards based upon our wanderings. I love to ponder on these things. Then might we not turn up at Haslemere for a grand bouquet to finish?

These meetings in the wilds are very well; but to be where men have been before us, great men, good men, to subtend our *excursus* by an enlightened consciousness of *res et personae*—oh, how glorious! The *res*, and to some extent the *personae*, are preserved for us by the stability of a republic, which, after all, guarantees our tranquil possession of such treasures. How long they will last who shall say? Ought we not to avail ourselves of our opportunities?

The other day I wrote to old George Marshall, one of my Christ Church tutors, now Rector of Milton,

and had a beautiful letter in reply. Milton is in Berks., not, I imagine, connected with the name of the poet, but well within the divine precincts I have indicated. I should like to see him once more, and have a talk about Lucretius, to whom he first attracted me. These things also 'are profitable unto men.' Good-bye.

TO MISS N. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

*February 24, 1896.*

I don't know what is meant by K.M. after Max Müller's name. I have often met Max. In old times at Oxford I used to know him. Also, he came to Clifton occasionally. I liked him very much. He is a suggestive writer, and never bores one. He has strong groundwork and can be relied upon. Considering that he is so clear, it is astonishing how deep he goes. Perhaps I ought to put it the other way. At his depth it is remarkable he should be so clear. . .

I may be left before Christmas with Dora only. That will be rather solitary. However, I never am and never can be alone; so that's all right. My pastorate over two parishes still flourishes: but I shall soon have one, perhaps both, off my hands. It is not without interest: but I am rather longing for a 'Sunday-at-home' and no church to go to. There has been a 'mission' here. Do you know what that is? Good gracious!



TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

February 27, 1896.

If you begin *Nick Ruby* forthwith it would be well to watch yourself narrowly as you move along the edge of the *lingua rustica*. Your tendency, I imagine, is to avoid it or pass lightly over or by it. But by way of compensation, relief, or what not, you will at times go right into it head over ears with a splash. The astonished Bentley, or whoever it is, looks on and is perplexed, if not shocked.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 28, 1896.

Do you know Dryden's *Eleonora*? Why is it praised so much? Surely it is strained and forced beyond all bearance. He had never seen the Countess, not even the Earl. Evidently it was a paid job, and, I should say, quite worthy of its origin. Of her alms-deeds—

Had she giv'n more, it had profusion been,  
And turned th' excess of goodness into sin.

Dryden all over, but not anything like his best. But there are fine things, witness—

So softly death succeeded life in her,  
She did but dream of heav'n, and she was there.

<sup>1</sup> Literary advice, especially as to Manx dialect.—J. Q.

But the—

Anchises looked not with so pleased a face  
In numbering o'er his future Roman race.

Nor Cybele, with half so blind an eye,  
Surveyed her sons and daughters of the sky.

(Ware, Virgil!) And this precious conceit—

As precious gums are not for lasting fire,  
They but perfume the Temple and expire;  
So was she soon exhaled, and vanished hence,  
A short sweet odour of a vast expense. (!!!)

Arn't you reminded of the 'aromatic splinters'<sup>1</sup>?

I hope Lord Abingdon was satisfied he had the  
worth of his money. He got 375 lines, at any rate,  
not an elegy, but a *descant*. Forgive *this* descant!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

March 3, 1896.

You don't contemplate climbing mountains? Of course Helvellyn will be obvious, and, I should think, that would be enough. But there is a fine mountain walk (no determined *apex*) from Patterdale to Hawes-Water, which we might give a day to.

I have been tapping some glens for primroses; 'divil a one,' 'divil a sign!' It's a late spring, and we do well to press on towards May. We really must try for a 'jocund company' of daffodils. I have never been in that country at the proper time, 'in vacant or in pensive mood.'

Yesterday I went well up on to the mountains, on

<sup>1</sup> *Annus Mirabilis*. (Of a cannon-ball falling on the spice-fleet.)

the chance of finding anything. The curse I imprecated on a wretched little yellow leaf, which counterfeited a primrose, in an amazingly probable place at the foot of a waterfall, would have reminded you of a *quaestio vexatissima* in the Gospels. Also I got drenched. Nothing but honeysuckles—in leaf, of course, not in flower. They are delightful to look at; but why on earth do they take such a time about the business? The leaves come out, sometimes, even before January, and the flowers certainly not earlier than June. They are good, cheerful things, though, pregnant with a doctrine of patience.

TO D. RINTOUL.

RAMSEY,

March 4, 1896.

Verily 'the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' Never mind!

And so back to Clifton, not, I dare say, without some sense of relief, even of compensation.

Mixed with his concern for you and your ultimate interest will be Irwin's joy. Indeed you must not impute it to him for unrighteousness if he suffers the joy to predominate, as he unquestionably will. So people have their several points of view. Mine, so far as it is several, bears upon a retreating figure.

You seemed to have come near me; but you fade away from the Mersey into—well, no void, or blackness, or dismay—into the light of familiar Clifton, where I can still focus you, though not often foregather with you.

I believe you will get a better place. By permanence in the 'arts' which have been so cordially attributed to you by the authors of your testimonials, you must succeed. I don't see how nature could have done more for a man, and all that I mean by an 'art' is the perfectly natural proclivity of culture, the process of growth. Dear me! our forefathers would have had it out like a shot—'growth in grace,' that's it, and what for no? But we have got so gingerly about these things. *False shame*, is it? Something false, at any rate, somewhere. But it shall not prevent me craving God's blessing upon you and yours in this disappointment.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

March 9, 1896.

I never in my life enjoyed anything more than your letter with its charming stories and sketches. The shag dance 'bates all'!! the light-hearted creatures. Wonder how old they were: grown-up men? Delicious! But it's all gone, gone, gone! And I suppose if they dance at all now at a mheillea, it's a waltz or a polka or the last new . . .<sup>2</sup> from the saloons. The 'whale' too is admirable. But the 'shag' for my money. Those three caps to indicate a point off Maughold Head, a point about Cornaa, and

<sup>1</sup> I had sent Mr. Brown sketches of the after entertainments at a Manx mheillea (harvest-home supper) sixty years ago. Shag = cormorant.—J. Q.

<sup>2</sup> Word illegible.—J. Q.

a point off Laxey; the craning the neck, now this way, now that, the squawk, the dive,—aw dear! aw dear! They were young in those days! The whole would be a perfect treasure for Pierre Loti; if indeed the Frenchman were capable of its humour. It seems to me quite consummate as it is. How can it be better? It is not for literary treatment—blow literary treatment! To see it would be the thing. Next to that, indications (stage-directions, hints like yours) send one skimming shag-like over the water. I could make such a splendid fool of myself in the *nîsus dramaticus*. I'm nearly doing it every other minute.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

March 15, 1896.

My travels, however, upon the stile business have hitherto been productive of much delight. I have revived some old friendships. Old Mrs. — (Raby) close to Glen May is one of the friends. It appears that in some lecture or another of mine at Peel, I had pronounced a fine eulogium on the dear old lady as many years dead. But behold! she liveth! yea, and a hearty energetic life. Her grandson (such a modest graceful creature about twenty-one) was with her when I called *in re* stiles. She didn't like the stiles a bit, but me she did. I sang songs for her, the *old* songs (she would have them). As we sat at tea, the old servant who waited on us took her full part in the conversation (how I *do* like that!); and it was a perfect apotheosis for your friend, I assure you. This was the kind of thing:—

OLD MRS. RABY. You remember him, don't you?

OLD SERVANT (*rapturous*). Of course I do.

MISTRESS. Tom Brown we were calling him, weren't we?

SERVANT. Aw bless me!

MISTRESS. And if there was a party or a picnic in those days, was it anything without 'Tom Brown'?

SERVANT. No! no! and good gracious! no!

I will devote the rest of this page to my blushes.

### TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

March 16, 1896.

What a glorious breeze! You must be catching it in Peel this morning. In the night great rattling of windows, straining of roof-timbers, banging of doors. Edith is a logical person, and, while we wavering males lay in bed sorely disturbed and perplexed, she got up, and went straight for the cause, got out into the yard, and made fast the principal peccant door in the midst of rain and wind, we profiting by the comparative peace which ensued—just like men!

I should like to see George MacDonald's *Lilith*. . . . Mythical and mystical, I expect, and, from what you say, largely unintelligible. Metaphysics are all very well in their own sphere, and, I dare say, I have gone as far as most people in that direction. To have thoroughly exhausted one such problem is quite enough. Then, drop it! Religion is distinct, and must never be mixed with it, or even touched by it. You might as well call in Algebra.

I know George well. He is a dear old soul. He has occasionally sent me copies of his books. *Sir Gibbie* is the best. . . . He is a most beautiful-looking old man, and I can remember him when he was quite young, a magnificent specimen of the very finest Highland type. He is a true Highlander, from Huntley in Aberdeenshire. . . . It is impossible not to have an affection for the sweet old mystic.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

March 21, 1896.

I had a big walk on Wednesday and Thursday, and am rather stiff and knocked up. The symptoms are not encouraging! Am I really going to turn my face to the wall? It's no use living if I can't walk and climb cliffs. Not the very smallest atom, it isn't. And my niece is coming over on April 17 on purpose to triumph over Cronk-ny-eary-laa and all the western heights. Imagine me *non capax*. Oh dear! Oh dear! The misery and the shame! When we foregather, I will tell you about my 'downfall and disgrace' this fatal week—and two ladies with me, 'nymphs of Dian's train'!!!

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

March 25, 1896.

. . . . .  
There is no doubt that one of the most absolutely vital and recuperative things that has happened to me

for a long time was the visit of Horatio Brown, whom if you see in Venice, love and bless for me. It was his second visit, and I do hope he will repeat it annually, making it an essential constituent of his pilgrimage northwards. That, too, was an admirable tramp from Port Iern to Peel. Also we had him to Renass. Renass is in the very centre of the island. You hide yourself well away from the sea. We did (quite a large party of us). Then we turned up and over the hills seawards, and so achieved the glory of the sea towards Jurby. The coast is the same colour, or very nearly the same, as that north of Ramsey, a very delicate red. This took Brown's fancy no end. And certainly both colour and gesture are very fine. The attitude is a lovely *fugitive* one. Ask Brown about it. I don't think you have been that walk. And, if you have the chance, ask him about our Tea in the rose-embowered cottage. One of the 'specialties' of this 'Spoot-vane' glen is that, as you approach the sea, the cottages bloom with roses of amazing size and immense profusion. Since you were here and went to Ballaglass, a great human interest has sprung up for me there—a weaver and his wife. They have been there of course ages ago; but we didn't happen upon them till 1894. And he is fair, and she is dark; and he is placid, gentle, sweet-eyed, very handsome, and she is—good heavens! a network of fire! A scoria? no, not that; the fire is in her eyes, but it is in her heart, and it flames out upon you, and wraps you round, and every wrinkle of her face is furrowed with it. But it is not a red face, just a deep chestnut, or the



varnish of an old Stradivarius. That's a woman—burning, not burnt out, nor likely to be. And she burns, and she flames, and she flames and she burns—the divinest old *bush*, and is not consumed in this Sinaitic glow (you are fresh from Exodus), ἐν φλογὶ πυρὸς βάτον. Yes, and the fire *is* divine. It is in the intensity of her nature, pure elemental fire, and to be received as such. Woe to the scoffer! woe to the blasphemer! woe—yes, woe to the aesthete! *Procul, o procul este profani!* Misinterpret this fire of loveliest old age because it is so volcanic? Look at the Cumaean Sibyl—that's it.

Last September Irwin and I met in *Ireland*. Wasn't that a great occasion? We met at the Giant's Causeway, and spent about a week there, and going round the north-east corner of the island, finishing at Belfast. No doubt Ballycastle was the gem of this tour, and Fair Head the gem of Ballycastle. The *tarns* right up on the top of Fair Head are an extraordinary 'feature'! One of these tarns is just where an eye would be placed in a man's head. It seems to fix its eternal gaze on Rathlin Island. That is a lonely spot, if you like. Few tourists ever land there; or, in fact, any one else. The natives talk Irish. I longed to go over there. We had a pleasant day westward of Port Rush, beyond Coleraine, at Castle Rock. . . . I stayed after Irwin left, and had a most refreshing time with my niece at Comber Manse, near Belfast. . . .

With my niece Nelly I climbed Slieve Donard, the highest of the Mourne Mountains (some 2,700 feet). We had a fine view, in which these dear little Manx hills played their part moderately but decidedly.

Of Irish character I saw but little. I rather think it hides away. On the whole I would predicate of it melancholy, or, perhaps, meanness, poverty, *absence of character*, neutrality of tint. An uninteresting people—that is, of course, up there in the North—a harsh-featured people. The whole time I was there I didn't see one handsome man, and only one pretty woman, and her prettiness was consistent with, if it did not consist in, slatterliness. No, they are not a great people. For beauty, the Manx are infinitely to be preferred—beauty of feature, voice, form. So are the North Lancashire and Lake Country people.

And behold! that's where I'm going now. After walking my niece Nelly round the island coast, I shall set off for Ulleswater, and meet Irwin there.

'To live one day of parting'—God knows what. *One* day, because it is so in Burns, but, in reality, one week. This will be from April 24 to May 1. I think we ought to have a good time, see some daffodils beside some lakes, and thus lay up some store of gold:—

To flash upon the inward eye,  
That is the bliss of solitude.

. . . . .

About May 5 to Rochdale, then to Fred (*our* Fred—yours and mine) at Bolton. . . . He was over as usual; and we bore you in mind fervently as we once more perambulated the Parish of Andreas, once more visited little Tommy Teare, went about generally promiscuous-lek, *benedicti benedicentes*.

This time we went and had tea with Ballakeeil-thusthay, the Charmer. He is about eighty-six,

a beautiful and a very sweet old creature, pious, of course, and holding everything as 'from the Lord.' He seemed perfectly candid about the 'Charming' business. It is a matter of prayer, as in the Bethesda, or faith-healing sect. Still I heard only the other day that when he prays over a cow, for instance, he takes care to place a *corrag suggane* on her horn. Corrag suggane, i.e. a thumb rope, a short bit of straw rope made by a peculiar twist of the thumb. No doubt this is a relic of paganism, which, almost unconsciously, and certainly without pagan intention, he retains.

I hope you will have a delightful journey from Venice homewards, and that you will find them all well.

TO A. W. MOORE<sup>1</sup>.

April 25, 1896.

A true Philologist, a true Ethnologist, Folklorist, scorns nothing; because he never can tell where his honest gleanings may not come in, what lacuna they may not supply, what literary tendency they may not illustrate, what parable they may not suggest. He feels that there is danger in letting any fragment go by; nay, something almost like literary treason in consulting his own case, taste, or prepossession, anything but the simple bits of what, to others, may appear rubbish, and even to himself, at times, super-

<sup>1</sup> On my telling him that some of my friends had remarked that they wondered at my taking the trouble to publish such a book (the *Manx Ballads*).—A. W. M.

fluous. Who has not felt this—this *responsibility*—on the Palatine Mount or at Pompeii? Did you not experience some such misgivings the other day in the Escorial or the Alhambra<sup>1</sup>?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

April 26, 1896.

Now here is a chance; it looks remote, but it might be fostered into propinquity. Why should we not meet in town? I shall be staying with my niece at Clapham: you will be at the Savile, say. Well, that is surely admirable. What do you think? Couldn't we *flâner* a bit? Stare in at shop windows? *rus in urbe* a bit? Place ourselves under the direction of the relative whom I will, *pro hac vice*, and with a myriad apologies, call *Guy*; *illo duce* surrender ourselves to asynartete φαντάσματα: play the fool (will *we*?) box the watch? hear the chimes at midnight? Irwin! it will be a second youth. You have no idea how the prospect arrides me, nay excites, convinces me.

TO MISS N. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

May 23, 1896.

I have been into Lancashire and Yorkshire for about ten days, and had a pleasant time with an old bachelor vicar. This was quite in the country, up one of those innumerable dales which wind away on either side of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to a recent visit of mine to Spain.—A. W. M.

A big mill (silk) down in the bottom; boundless wealth, comfort, and stability all about. Everything emerald green, though this can't last long. Fine, hearty, well-behaved people. You could hardly imagine that they could turn into the Douglas tripper; but I suppose by some marvellous transmutation they do. My bachelor friend had a big dinner-party to meet me, including some old Clifton pupils, and we had excellent music. The music in the church, too, was very good, rather tremendous, let it be said, and the congregation an overwhelming crowd. These Sunday-school gatherings in the North, you know, are great institutions. Families meet and have no end of festivities. They assemble from all parts, much cooking and hospitality in general. Yet they contrive to cram the church as well as their friends—a noble folk, if ever there was.

I walked over Blackstone Edge to Rochdale. The hills stood 'dressed in living green' with brown heather and immense patches of the young blaeberry, colour neither green nor brown—tint of young oak would hit it off pretty well. One of my old Cliftonians (A. Whitley, Halifax) accompanied me, a very delightful companion. He had brought with him a lot of Lancashire and Yorkshire stories, which he read to me as we sat on the Edge. These were jolly 'doin's.'

At Rochdale I was with Archdeacon Wilson and his never-to-be-too-highly-commended wife. Fancy—allowed? no, but *encouraged* and *bidden* to smoke in my bedroom, and with a bottle of consummate whisky on a little side-table at my elbow by the bed;

breakfast also in bed, served by a kindly Lancashire lad beaming with good nature. These luxuries, however, I emphatically refused after the first night. Here I did nothing but smoke and talk, look up the Lancashire poets, and enjoy capital music (Grieg, &c.). The musician was a bonny little Irish woman—O Margaret! Aunt Margaret! what ails ye at the Irish? What's to hinder one loving the Kelt who abides in the bogs of the West?

*The Deemster* has fine things in it; but it is not such a whirlwind as *The Manxman*. Take *The Manxman* as a rapture, not a reality. It is not Manx or anything else that 'savours of the realty.' As well ask for a map of Prospero's Isle as a picture of the Isle of Man from *The Manxman*. Don't bother about that. Surrender yourself to the hurly-burly of splendour and get carried away, God knows where! You are on the frontier of Shakespearia, and what more do you want? Shakespeare? Ah, well! The dear old Manx folk are terribly puzzled, many of them quite outraged. 'Local colour' is knocked to smithereens (glorious smithereens!), anachronism runs riot: this Pegasus is no pony creel-laden with Manx mountain turf: he bounds over space, and with his forefeet paws the stars. Read and enjoy. 'On the back of Pegasus,' say you! bumping and thumping, and all 'in a muck of sweat'? Nay, but streaming, gleaming, meteoric, cometic, breathless but ecstatic.

'Nonsense!' Well, Ma'am, I dare say you are right. I didn't say you *could* ride Pegasus; but it's worth trying. You can always fall back upon a 'Donkey in the Cevennes.' . . . Love to all.

TO MR. RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

June 3, 1896.

Your idea of forcing, or fostering, the sale of my little books is most amusing. But it shows the kindness of your heart.

It is odd, but do you know? I have a perfectly serene confidence in their future. How it will come to pass I am not prepared to say, nor does it much matter. A child, perhaps yet unborn, will do it. A great poet is yet to be, a Manx poet, transcending all our 'small doin's.' He will be called Kewish, Shimmin, Quayle, Cottier—— All right! He will stumble across my *old ditties*, he will love them, he will wonder, he will muse, the fire will be kindled, and at the last he will speak with his tongue. And he will say—'This man was my brother, my father, my own real self.' Through Kewish I shall find utterance, through Shimmin, through Quayle, through Cottier. Even so my heart goes stretching back to some possible progenitor whom I'd give worlds to find. I cannot find him; but I shall be found, though after many days—found of Cottier, Quayle, Shimmin, Kewish. You'll see! Ah no, you'll not.

Dear friend, you and I will be far away. At any rate, under the sweet Manx sod we knew and cherished we shall sleep the last sleep. And Kewish will be the *boee*! He will be the poet of the twentieth century. How he will yearn towards us! He will handle loftier themes, and broader branches will

issue from his stem; but his roots will be in our ashes, in the bed of dialectic homeliness which we have laid.

Theer now!

And I shall be perfectly satisfied, feeding the young native genius with racy sap, sending up the blossoms to blow in Manx air, and make all Manx men and Manx women happy. Kewish will, I doubt not, give readings of our booklets, just to give the people a notion of what this old stuff was like. Kewish will shed the tear of sympathetic divination. Leave it to KEWISH! 'A gran' chap—KEWISH!'

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*June 14, 1896.*

I know nothing of Monier Williams and his appreciation of my 'Doctor.' I do remember some laudatory reference in the same direction by Max Müller. But the 'hundred best books' (!!)—what rot! It was a craze, I think, and a very vulgar illiterate one, some ten or twelve years ago. Wasn't there a prize offered by some paper for the (number variant) of best books, also for best living authors, painters, statesmen, indeed, I imagine, MEN, i.e. distinguished men. You were expected to head the list with Gladstone, then all things were possible. But surely these dashes at twopenny-halfpenny divinations were intended for third-rate ladies' maids.



## TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

*June 23, 1896.*

. . . The wreck of the *Drummond Castle* is much in my mind. What lovely creatures those French are! The women and children carrying their poor drowned sisters! that little baby in its coffin decked with roses! Don't you yearn towards these dear souls? What are Agincourt and Waterloo in the presence of such sweetness? Well, I love them anyway, and shall brood over them and pray for them while I live.

Your Greek Professor must be a fine fellow; I long to know more of him. It would be delightful to effect this through you. But you're in love with the other chap. All right! Married, too! Is — married? Dear me! everybody is married.

## TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*June 28, 1896.*

Of course you know that delightful creature, your countryman, Alfred Percival Graves ('Father O'Flynn,' &c.). He has written some delightful songs for a collection of old Manx airs, which a friend of mine is bringing out.

On my way back from London I shall drop my two daughters, consigned to various domiciles in Clifton, and pass by to my sister's at Cardiff. This will, I imagine, be in October, the very time for

Tintern! Could we arrange a meeting there? Unparalleled! just a day and a night. The meeting at Tintern would be supplementary to the meeting in town, for on that I count absolutely.

My time has been given largely of late to my friend W. H. Gill's *Manx Song-book*. He spent last Friday with me, and 'from morn to dewy eve' we dwelt in a perfect bower of melody. It will be a very charming book. He writes excellent English, and is something of a scholar. We looked at each other with a mild surmise. I can tell you, our delight was huge when we discovered a genuine Dorian mood, which, in our native ditties, prevails over the others, though, of course, we have Ionian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixo-Lydian, and Aeolian.

Perhaps I ought to call them *modes*, not moods. We have not many of the Aeolian, but one great beauty—'Hic my graih shagh'm' ('My love went by me')!!! Easy all!

PS.—Claudian<sup>1</sup> very fine.

#### A SONNET SENT TO MISS GRAVES.

In Memoriam, ALEXANDER WOOD, drowned in Loch Leven,  
June 27, 1896, aged 22.

July 16, 1896.

We knew you actor, athlete, well-equit  
For either function<sup>2</sup>. Shakespeare bent his gaze  
Upon you, seen amid the purple haze  
Of *Lethe's wharf*, and said—'Imperial lipt

<sup>1</sup> A fragment I sent him from the 'Aponus.'

<sup>2</sup> Alick's performance of Brutus in *Julius Caesar* at the College Play was very memorable.—T. E. B.

The boy is Roman: so my Brutus gript  
 The steel.' Old victors of the Graecian days  
 Admiring mused—'Such limbs, to win the bays,  
 Olympia saw for contest duly stript.'  
 But now to us rememb'ring stand revealed  
 The loftier purpose and the larger aim,  
 The soul of truth, the virgin modesty  
 So delicately sensitive of shame,  
 The pure white life to carnal eyes concealed,  
 The life that was, the life that is to be.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

August 28, 1896.

For commercial purposes it may perhaps be necessary to dip his<sup>1</sup> foot now and then into the unsavoury maelstrom<sup>2</sup>. But for all high literary purposes, for the atmosphere of pure thought and strenuous endeavour, *procul, o procul este profani*. He is always sweetest and most rational and intellectually clear when he banishes from his soul these gibbering phantoms.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 9, 1896.

I had a wretched journey to Rochdale<sup>3</sup>, eight hours' delay owing to fog. At Liverpool my practised eye detected the symptoms of a storm outside. And a storm we had! A twopenny-halfpenny miscreant of

<sup>1</sup> Of a distinguished literary friend.—J. Q.

<sup>2</sup> London.—J. Q.

<sup>3</sup> i. e. from Clifton.

a little steamer crawled shamefaced up to the stage. I never saw anything under steam or canvas more disreputable. She seemed to apologize for her very existence, and is, though so small, a notorious 'rowler.' So 'we rowled, and we rowled, and we rowled.' I, of course, went below, and availed myself of my ancient seamanship to remain there. But what with sea-sick women and children who will persist in overflowing into what we used to call the 'gentlemen's cabin,' I had a hard time of it, much alleviated, though, by *Fitz*<sup>1</sup>, whom I read as long as daylight lasted. The wind had risen and pursued us, and, just in the nick of time turned, with a vicious twist into the north-east, making it impossible to land at the Long Pier. So we had to wait till high water at eleven, lying to in the bay, 'rowlin' gunwales under, and smashing the crockery at an infernal rate. The captain came down to tell me how matters stood, or 'rowled,' or jumped, or generally played old Harry. He introduced an absolutely magnificent-looking fellow, whom he left to entertain me, saying that he was 'fuss-rate company.' This with the usual result of such introductions. You should never inaugurate relations of this kind by guaranteeing conversational powers. He only got as far as, 'Did ye know Parson Holmes? Well, that's the man that christened me!' He then blushed all over his stupendously handsome face, seemed troubled, blurted out a sort of joke—possibly the 'christening' was intended to lead up to this—the joke being his age, which he stated to be *sixty-four*! and he looked just forty. Glorious, happy creature!

<sup>1</sup> I had given him *Fitzgerald's Letters* for the journey.

But we didn't get much further. I tried to draw him on. He fell off. I baited with the best joke I could invent. He turned away, reappeared down the companion at infrequent intervals as if to have another try, then finally vanished. I wonder how he accounted for his failure to Captain F. on the bridge. But oh, such a man! I never saw his like. The very perfection of manhood, the dear old boy, dripping all over me in his oilskins, and torturing himself to invent a phrase not totally inadequate. I hope to see him again.

I landed in the teeth of a fierce north-easter—nice work for a man recent from bedroom fires and hot grog! When I got up to my house, my people were all snug between the blankets. I knocked them up, and what may come I know not. Some additional cold of a pituitous character has already pronounced itself; but I hope nothing worse. Between Rochdale and my 'island home' just fourteen hours of 'rowing.' No wonder at the blasphemy with which the very sides of our old rattle-trap seemed swollen—as e. g. 'Lord — ye! Keep the brute's head to the wind!' But I will not give another specimen. It was a steady *crescendo* 'all the time.' Blessings on *Fitzgerald*! How delightful he was! How he comforted me! I have now finished him. That is the worst of it.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 22, 1896.

When your letter came I was reading the *Philoctetes*. Why worry me? Don't! Don't! The descent is

too dreadful. I distinctly refuse to be drawn any more. I am in a happier Lemnos, in an ἀμφιτρῆς αὔλιον where no wound burns, and the air is sweet.

πολύτροπος though you be, I'll not budge. I see what you want; you want me to read that book again. Never! The Gods do so to me and more also, if I repeat the experiment! I have just finished a very pleasant reading of the *Religio Medici*. How delightful it is!

Nothing approaches the meridian splendour of *Weir of Hermiston*. Until further notice, please consider that my *Ne plus ultra*. I really don't expect, during the short remainder of my life, to see anything to beat that. A sweet taste to leave the world with.

My cold has nearly ceased, I still wear a wrap, but it is of the smallest, and we are having some delicious weather. With all this my affections flow steadily and increasingly Clifton-wards. You have cured me of a cold that was beginning to irk my spirit, the sense of estrangement, and a deadness. Well, thank God for that! I believe the cure is permanent, and that my next visit to Clifton promises to be a very happy one.

Quick enthusiasms must needs be superficial. They live, and die, and live again; they succeed one another with a fair show of continuity. Let us be content. I imagine the great difficulty of being content is the cherishing of inordinate and unreasonable expectations. For which 'overhaul' Adam Smith; *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, an old friend of mine, cold-blooded, but wholesome. My dear friend, both you and I are of the hot-blooded species, and ought

to take some such drug at least twice a year. Brimstone and treacle sufficed for the pupils of Mr. Squeers. We want a more searching specific.

I have just found that Y., who has read nothing for years but Chrysostom and Augustine, has taken to poetry, and his eyes are opened in a wonderful way. His avenue of approach to the Muses is rather casual—Clough and Walt Whitman! Good Heavens! Hear it, ye bishops!

TO HORATIO F. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

November 28, 1896.

This is a very charming book, this *Shropshire Lad*. Is he [the author<sup>1</sup>] a highly cultivated person, through sheer cultivation attaining simplicity; or a simple person marvellously protected from vulgarity and the *banal*? Some of the poems indicate so much self-restraint, so much artistic cuteness, that I incline to the former opinion. In either case the results are very satisfactory. A thousand thanks for your kind present.

Kipling is my constant wonderment. But I am not quite sure about him. I have not read his last book, though *MacAndrew's Hymn* I have read as quoted *in extenso* by some reviewer. It is, as you say, superb. Kipling seems a versatile being, without a pivot—magnificent sky-rocket of a genius. There is nothing he can't do, but I question whether he will ever do

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Housman.

anything really great. He is at his second wind, and one gets anxious about his staying power.

*Weir of Hermiston* I take to be the most consummate thing that has been written for many years. Don't you agree with me? THAT WOMAN—not Mrs. Weir, though she is marvellously good, but the humble relative who occupies the place of chief and confidential servant!!! No one but a Scot can enter into this character. That I am able so thoroughly to *feel* it, I consider the strongest proof of my Scottish origin. *Such* a woman! And yet they said Stevenson couldn't draw a woman. And the passion of love—yes, *love*; yes, *passion*—the positive quasi-sexual (or shall I drop the *quasi*?) longing for the young Hermiston. Good God! what depth! what truth! what purity! what nobility! If the century runs out upon this final chord, what more do I want? Let me die with the sough of it in my ears. It is enough: *nunc dimittis, Domine*. You will go on to other joys: the coming century will bring them to you. But to me—well, well, all right. In heaven I will bless you, Louis Stevenson.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

November 29, 1896.

I was rather more than two months on the ramble. My visit to Clifton was, of course, exceedingly interesting. . . . Your own letter interested me greatly. How altogether right you are about the good wife!

<sup>1</sup> After his return.



We watch these maternal phenomena with curious equanimity, whereas they are daily miracles, and deserve our fullest worship. . . . I may just venture to remark the marvellous spread of respectable writing. It would seem as if everybody could produce no end of copy not destitute of a certain style. One gets bewildered and has to keep firm hold of one's judgment. The point is this—we must look to something beyond style and diction, or these people will sweep us off our feet. . . . Our illiterate friends (can we call them illiterate?), reckless of spelling, and in grammar *titubant*, soar to heights of real eloquence. What a pity it is, this wretched accessory of writing! How magnificently they could declaim their compositions! The 'Locals' (local preachers) do that, and I imagine do it well. To bind them down to the beggarly elements of punctuation, &c., would be fatal. . . .

Have you read *Weir of Hermiston*? It is Louis Stevenson's last and greatest, though unfinished work. A veritable masterpiece. It doesn't exactly take one's breath away as Rudyard Kipling did when I first read his *Barrack-room Ballads*: but it fills one with a steady glow. You'll not cry over it, as we may all be well excused for crying over Ian Maclaren. But the great men go beyond tears. I don't mean that Stevenson does quite this. One thing he does: he treads the heights above the watershed of the facile and obvious lachrymose. You don't want your pocket-handkerchief; your heart is full, but not exactly *that* way.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 8, 1896.

Your 'causerie' (doubtful word?) is delightful : . . . depend upon it, the texture is good and sound. So is the current of ideas, and it is wonderfully taking and bright.

Interesting it is moreover, a refreshing walk in a happy place. Surprising too, a revelation to lots of people. 'Who now reads Cowley?' One does read, and with something akin to remorse, these glorious things: and every generous mind must feel concerned that the neglect be made good. This chivalrous mode of approaching the subject runs through the whole essay, and while we admire and sympathize, indignation is not far off, nor tears.

Talking about the *Philoctetes*, I have been so much struck with the splendour of Neoptolemus. What a noble cub! And how strongly contrasted in this play is the difficulty of the choruses with the straightforward dignity of the heroes. This can't surely arise from the exigencies of metre alone. The doubting, hinting, halting chorus is, I suppose, as it should be. But I love to think of the great men, old and young, talking so plainly. They seem to scorn hesitation and the cowardice of suggestion. Hang it! even Ulysses will not have it. The miserable sailors are obviously ignoble; their shifting ἀποσιωπήσεις, where 'more is meant than meets the ear,' their insinuations, their general baseness, they weary me. Or is it merely the fact that they are very hard Greek, possibly a bit corrupt?

## TO MISS RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

*December 12, 1896.*

You must not trouble yourself too much about these nymphs. Penelope was the wife of Ulysses. But, of course, there might be other Penelopes; for the name means 'a woman that weaves.' And in those times almost every woman both span and wove. We know that Ulysses' wife wove, and, for a purpose, unwove. But weaving was the work of every housewife. So there you are! Dryops was the son of the river-god, Spercheus, and was the father of the Penelope you mention. Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, was the daughter of Icarius. Pan was the son of another Penelope. But the Greeks talked a lot of nonsense about their innumerable nymphs. Egeria was a Roman muse, called a Camena. She lived in a cave. There's a well in the cave. I have been to it. The cave is near Rome, at the Porta Capena, the gate through which you pass on to the great Southern Road, the Appian Way. I did not see Egeria! She was a very wise woman, and the men of our time, and of all time, ought to remember how much they can learn from good and wise women.

No, Santa Claus never comes to me. It seems rather hard, but he only comes to very young people. I have no doubt he will come to you. Probably he is on the way already. Where does he come from? Far?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 15, 1896.

<sup>1</sup> To tell me what you did was both necessary and a real kindness. I confess that to dwell upon it would be to me a trial. You did not dwell upon it, or touch it one atom more than was needed. In my reply you no doubt observed a corresponding brevity. That was what it meant, not a scrap more or less. If I felt at liberty to enlarge upon my distress, it would be in the direction of apologies. But here I am doing just what I said I would not do. Once for all then *a clear sky without a cloud of reserve*. You know I keep back nothing. Gratitude, gratitude: my heart has room for nothing more.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 15, 1897.

... I was only just able to write a hasty line ('an 'asty snack') stating my opinion crudely that Mr. Courthope<sup>2</sup> was not like your mother, but that he reminded me strongly of the *Poet Cowper*—'a fine nervous face like his.' I hope you will, before you have read this, have recovered the photograph. ...

I have an article on Spenser coming out soon in the *New Review*. I want to convert people back to Spenser. With a view to this I am willing to com-

<sup>1</sup> Generosity is writ so large on this cryptic fragment that I thought it worth inserting.

<sup>2</sup> My uncle in Western Australia.

promise, and, dropping the *F. Q.* ('for the hardness of their hearts'), to urge upon them five poems. Do you know what they are? In order of merit—

1. The Two Hymns of Love and Beauty.
2. The Prothal.
3. The Epithal.
4. Mother Hubbard's Tale.
5. Muiopotmos.

What would yours be?

Here is a sonnet from Mozley to me for the New Year, which I think quite fine:—

TO T. E. B.

Dear poet of the isle so sharply set,  
A single jewel in the crystal deep  
Encircled by four realms, whose people keep  
The Celtic fire and antique flavour yet:  
This verse of mine will tell I ne'er forget  
Yourself and yours, and gladly by the steep  
Of North Barrule, or where the waters leap  
In Sulby's Glen, would roam with you, and let  
Your racy converse while away the hours.  
Still do I hope, although it tarries late,  
To walk with you thro' Mona's springtime flowers!  
But now I waft the wish allowed by fate:  
That this new year, by heaven's favouring powers,  
Which finds you brave, may leave you fortunate.

J. R. M.

*December 30, 1896.*

TO J. R. M.

Speed on, great Sol, and bid the hours renew  
The diamond-y-paven Zodiac.  
Bid busy zephyrs clear away the rack  
Of ruined months: let hyacinths be blue  
Once more, nor any primroses eschew  
The haunts of scented silence, where the black  
Tempestuous North not enters, nor his pack  
Accursed that yelps, but finds no passage through.  
Come, Mozley, with the coming of the spring,  
Catch the first breath that hints her presence near.  
Barrule is frowning, but the frown will pass;  
Sulby her sweetest song prepares to sing;  
And I have noted how the waking year  
(For you, unquestioned) stirs in Ballaglass.

T. E. B.

*January 1, 1897.*

Good luck to you this term! A good time with  
the crocuses and the daffodils! and all happiness.

My kindest regards to your brother and his family.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*January 22, 1897.*

We are just now going through a great trouble,  
and it is hard to think of anything else. Our poor  
servant—a very excellent one—is off her head. She  
is not a native, will not give me her friends' address;  
and everything falls upon my wretched responsibility.  
To some extent I am relieved by the admirable

courage and benevolence of my sisters-in-law. They have taken the poor creature in and are watching over her, and practically nursing her. The doctor has a strong objection to her remaining there. He has told me quite definitely that it is done at my risk, and that he will not be answerable for any consequences. These are the times to try men. He is a clever young Cantab, knowing the morbid side, and I am a blind old psychologist supposed to be versed in the normal condition of the  $\psi\chi\eta$ , and I would fain run away, or give him *carte blanche* to use his accredited methods.

But I am not fit for these things. The close contemplation of *dementia*, nay, the mere presence in the air of a floating *dementia* almost kills me. I believe I have an affinity for it, and it at once attracts me, and makes me shudder. . . .

It blows great guns, a mighty blizzard strides landward, its wings deep purple tinged with a fury of sweltering snow. In front of it leap the exultant waves, blue and pale green; behind all, an ingruent horror.

We have just received a telegram from our servant's friends: a brother will come to-morrow. This is to a certain extent a relief: at least just sufficient to restore the equilibrium.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 7, 1897.

Have you read *The Table Talk of Shirley*? It is rather a pretentious title, but the book contains some

good things. A good half consists of materials for a life of J. A. Froude. Really excellent. I have a liking for this amorphous sort of biography, and could wish that many big tomes were arrested at a little before the stage of precipitation. The world will have to drop a deal of its baggage. It would be convenient to do so at starting the new century. Let it start *expeditior*. Have a select committee to sit upon these aspirants for immortality who go on haunting the obscure corridors of time.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 14, 1897.

Yes, yes! so I did, but clean forgot it<sup>1</sup>. Sorry for A.'s house-supper. Certainly! oh, dear me, yes! I remember it perfectly; not the song, but the circumstance. How on earth did I yield? The pressure must have been enormous. At what exact tumbler does one fall to pieces like that?

'Remindin' me' that I have followed you 'into the silent land.'

Into the land of the great departed,  
Into the silent land.

You see, I even quote Longfellow. Yes, I am a teetotaller. You can't become that with impunity. In my case it is a counsel of perfection, but founded on a diagnosis half mine and half my doctor's. Ah, Irwin! never again shall we—but it is too painful, and life hereafter but a shabby business.

<sup>1</sup> He promised to write a 'House' song.



That is very good of Coleridge<sup>1</sup>. But how it suffers from the degradation of the phrase 'first-class.' Was it ever creditable to say 'a first-class' gentleman, &c.? Did Coleridge say it with a conscious affectation or air of smartness? As things stand now, the expression is little short of indecent!

Your Hazlitt on *Caliban* is charming. I know so little of Hazlitt. He must be well worth reading.

'Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.' Not exactly that; but four and twenty crocuses shining in my garden. They look delightful and spring-like. Snowdrops have been out a long time; but they look so like *babies' funerals* that I had rather they stayed away.

A good letter from Worthington is a good thing. I had one the other day.

I have written to Grenfell. You describe my feeling about him to a nicety. He is a lovely and a noble spirit. As the tie by which he holds on to the living sphere becomes more attenuate and precarious, his sweetness is more exquisite, and his interest more tender. It seems just one long delicate embrace in which he includes us all. Heaven gives this grace; it is so rare and so—I use the word deliberately—so *edifying*.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

February 25, 1897.

Yesterday Dora and I went up Sulby Glen, taking with us two lady friends. We caught it, and no

<sup>1</sup> 'Cowley's prose is the prose of a first-class gentleman.'

mistake. About eight miles of drench and bellowing. The ladies had to get changes of raiment and wait till their own 'things' were dry. Two gentlemen with steaming tumblers occupied the bar. Our hostess saw that wouldn't do, and lighted a beautiful fire in a private apartment.

The gentlemen proved two very capital fellows. One was tall, looked aggressive, the absolute John Bull, you would have said—not a bit of him; Manx as they make them. But he did the external John Bull to perfection, even threw in a bit of brusquerie, *a possibility of rudeness*. Oh, certainly, John Bull confessed. Meantime his companion was a lovely little creature, gentle, tractable, flexible, all the *bles* that are good and delightful. He was evidently very much under the influence of the *pseudo* John Bull, looked up to him with something like awe. I tackled the pseudo. He was a tremendous person, but I took his measure, and crept gradually within his guard. Yes, nearly a perfect English accent, but a touch here and there quite unmistakable. I had him; he was Manx! I drove him in upon his courtesy; that was infallible; so were his aitches.

But the sweet, gentle creature, his companion, over whom he exercised such influence, was the Englishman, a 'party' (yes, but he did not say that) from *Nottingham*. There he lives, there in a house which he calls (it is on his card) *Ellan Vannin veg veen*, 'The darling little Isle of Man'; he cherishes Keltic dreams and Menapian sympathies. Wound himself round me with every Manx blandishment, discovered me as the author, and as nearly cried.

The Manxman stayed at the limit of courtesy; no gush for the John Bull, however *pseudo*. He seemed to adhere to his friend with a certain stateliness of indulgence. I think he had begun with the intention of not discovering me. But his hand being forced, he rose to the occasion splendidly, and spoke of the *pride*, &c., *deeming himself fortunate to have had the opportunity*, &c., then becoming once more rigid with a fine reserve.

The end of my story is charmingly Manx (Manx, observe, *out of the season*!). For all this trouble, extra fire, drying clothes, delicious tea, the charge was *zero*. 'Bless my soul! Mrs. —, what's the meaning of this?' 'Aw, well, sir, ye see, sir, &c., &c.'

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

March 10, 1897.

I am in the Dr.'s hands and really bad, the consequence of three drenchings wildly encountered by me in rapid succession . . .

A—— has a splendid gift of folly, a gift which to others must often seem a fatality. Such a rollicking mad baby of a chap. God bless the like though! I love them. And sweet old ——! That's another, only so much more so, so much sweeter, and so much gentler. Only the divine trickle of the madness soaking the brain-bath. That's what they agree in. And that is what makes them so delightful—perfect honeycomb! . . .

What a ghastly picture you draw of X——! But

exquisitely hit off with a devilish *vraisemblance* which I recognize as a touch of genius. Yes! but the very excess of the horror, Dantesque in its naked beastliness, ought to have terrified you back into moderation and the limits of possibility. From what abyss of distortion you conjured up that spectre I know not. It shows the depths of the Aeschylean fury that is within you. I write this in sheer admiration, I assure you.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

March 26, 1897.

<sup>1</sup> What a business! 'Fire! Fire!' Ucalegon starts in me. I am awfully sorry. You are not insured? Why, you're worse than I. My insurance only costs 10s. a year. Go and do thou likewise.

It must have given you all a great fright. An invaluable experience, no doubt, but one you could dispense with.

I don't get out the very smallest atom. What am I to do? Go out in the very teeth of the gale? Well, perhaps not. Still the wind has always been such a friend of mine. I want to plunge into it, and laugh in its face, and shout. Rain, too, is one of my joys. I want to wash myself, soak myself in it; hang myself over a meridian to dry, dissolve (still better) into rags of soppy disintegration, blotting paper, mash and splash and hash of inarticulate protoplasm.

Up on those hills what things to be suffered! What things to be done! chiefly the former.

<sup>1</sup> We had had a fire.

Just to submit yourself to the squalid process and become squelch. Wouldn't that be nice? Yet I suppose one would go on hankering through all eternity for contiguity of atoms, even a row and some kind of uproar opposing the final dissipation.

I never was a dissipated person, but I should desire to be dissipated on some Sierra, swept and reduced to the viewless void.

And so, hold hard, get back into form. This isle is quite vague and *void* enough; and I swear I think it is taking to itself wings, and meditates a flight towards 'the backside of the world,' 'fluttered into' Limbo 'rags.' Well it must go without me; I must be precipitate and residuous.

Considering that I can't get out, I am doing pretty well. As an opposite pole of irritation, dissolution, what you will, there has been set up the Spring-cleaning. All things get mixed, chaotic, devious borne. It is a fearful time. Your *Concio*<sup>1</sup> has vanished, no doubt only for a season. It will turn up like the young Princes in the Tower, a-smilin' round the 'pillar.' Cast your *Concio* upon the house-cleaning, and you shall see it after (let us hope) a moderate number of days. It was an admirable *Concio*; I thoroughly enjoyed it. Even, if you don't convince people, you do well to lift up a standard, and stick it high, and stick it tight, if it be but a retrospective Mizpah.

I would give anything to read Miss Holroyd's letters. They come just at a meeting-of-the-ways—a literary *rond-point*, where we can do exceedingly

<sup>1</sup> A paper I wrote and sent him.

well with them. But I suppose I shall not see them. Of course, I have plenty to read. I am now reading Gautier's *Capitaine Fracasse*. The language is French of the age of Louis XIII. That is rather a handicap. Why not Louis-Philippe? But we must bear in mind that it is intended to be a quasi-picaresque novel, and aims at nothing but a series of adventures rather loosely strung together.

I have an article on Spenser in the *New Review* of April. You remember how Ste. Beuve every now and then took up some solid and obvious classic (*Corneille*, *Bossuet*, &c.), and abstained for a while from out-of-the-way authors, or from archaeological or bibliographical questions.

PS.—Assure Miss Irwin and your sister of my deepest sympathy and concern.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RANSEY,

April 7, 1897.

Poor old Grenfell. What a brave spirit it was! So bright and true.

I feel very lonely.

There was no help for it. The seal of death was on him when we last parted. . . .

Did you ever meet a Paladin like G.? Gentle and faithful, unselfish, and of the purest chalybean, stainless and pure. I have known him twenty-seven years, and all the time he has been to me a marvel, a revelation of what man may be at his best. If there

were many such we might augur well for the race. But I have known only one such, one whom to know has been a joy and a pride. Let us bury him in our heart of hearts.

Clevedon, with its wallflowers, would be easier of access than Torquay, and, I should say, preferable. The smell of the wallflowers, combined with a powerful blend of sea smell, always made me happy at Clevedon. Scenically, it is not so ambitious as Torquay, but it has a humble (*humilis*) look with it, and a kindly, that does one good. Also you scarcely meet anybody, and some of the walks are real raptures for a quiet, brooding spirit. What would I not give to go to Cadbury with you? or Portishead? or, indeed, anywhere? but, if specially, somewhere where we might be free from *wind*. And the coast provides that exemption. All the way to Portishead it has behind it a sort of hollow-way within which you can be quite safe, and dream. The dream is now the thing. Oh, let us dream! a chance word now and then, a cowslip, a violet; but mainly the all but continuous dream.

Wherever you go, I sincerely hope that Miss Irwin and your sister, and Dida, if there be no others, will have a sweet *consensus somniandi*. For that is what you can best do at Clevedon. It will strengthen them so after that drawing of the curtains, in the dead of night—was it? Well, after that alarm and perturbation unwonted in the lives of ‘peaceful faymales.’

I return you ——’s poem. I am glad to see he woos the muse. As yet the oat is *tenuis*; but we

may hope, fairly hope, for larger expansions, and flights into the empyrean. He has tried his 'prentice hand' on a bit of *diablerie*, and not without success. I would suggest the practice of mechanism, and the strict cultivation of the ear.

I have read Stevenson's *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, wherein I commend the 'Walt Whitman,' the 'Thoreau,' and the 'Villon.' But how wonderfully moderate and judicious is his treatment of these persons! I think I told you my impression of *Margaret Ogilvy*. On the whole, it disappointed me. I am now going to read *Weir of Hermiston* for the second time. I can hardly fancy my changing my opinion about that. But we shall see.

#### TO MISS GRAVES.

April 9, 1897.

I confess I did not think so highly of *Margaret Ogilvy* as did Hall Caine, though the book is, in many respects, charming. The fact is all my faculty of admiration is 'bespoke' for *Weir of Hermiston*. I have just read it again. The elder Kirstie bates all! The 'nocturnal visit' to Archie's chamber is simply stupendous. Oh, these middle-aged loves, how strong and glorious, and to literature how *new*!

When I am next in Peel I shall read your mother a lecture upon the supreme duty of taking care of oneself. It will come nicely from me, won't it? A ter'ble obstinate oul' woman! Yiss! she is! All very fine! But 'motes or bames,' let her choose which, and pull away—it's well to be rid of them—aye!



## TO A FRIEND.

I heard of his death only yesterday. I think I knew that when we parted last we should never meet again in this world.

He was inexpressibly dear to me, and, indeed, so entirely lovable a friend I never had. Looking back upon the past, upon our long connexion so close and so full of interest, I see nothing that is not wholly beautiful. He was a man to love with one's whole heart, and it was thus I loved him, and shall always love. The winsomest of all my friends, the purest, the most honourable and stainless. I am lonely here, specially so just now, and I expatiate in a wide field of sorrow: it is a field of tombs becoming more and more populous. God bless you, my dear friend, and make you strong to bear, and guide, and hallow the memories that you feel to be most precious. Not all sad that life, was it? With that bright and happy spirit you knew many a joy as well as many a grief. On the whole, your life has been a rich and overflowing one, and you have fought a good fight, sustained the sinkings of a noble heart, and now it is Peace—now it is Peace.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

*April 26, 1897.*

My blessings on you! you speak of inspiration, encouragement, what not, coming from me. With

<sup>1</sup> After reading *The Captain of the Parish*.

*The Captain of the Parish* I am supremely contented, I can die happy. To have had anything to do with the γένεσις of such a work makes me very proud. Perhaps I have leavened you and my barn may stir in your young and vigorous veins. All right—but, however that may be, I have got what I longed for, and, ever since I came to the island, conjectured—a new Manx writer honestly suckled at a Manx breast. You will be faithful to us, and continue, and expand, and heighten the tradition, the sacred deposit. . . . You see I am excited, but how can I help it?

TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

May 3, 1897.

What a nuisance it is we can't agree about the book<sup>1</sup>! You are profoundly dissatisfied with it, whereas I am more charmed than ever. No doubt I expressed myself in pretty strong terms before I really could be said to have known much about the work. I anticipated great things, and felt justified in doing so. But now that I have read it I am simply delighted. It is a very fine piece of work indeed; in parts, most exquisite.

Would it be asking you too much if I begged you to suspend your judgment until you have read my article? Your disapproval is so absolute and without exception that I still have hopes it has sprung from a misconception. I can understand that one

<sup>1</sup> *The Captain of the Parish.*

must either very much like or very much dislike the book. As it caught you on the dislike face of your sympathies, you condemn it *in toto*. Try again!

I heartily endorse your judgment of Manx women. For one prince in our Thule, I know a good dozen princesses.

But I like — exceedingly. In a humbler rank I have met with even nobler specimens, in fact I have met with perfect gods. Their loveliness has positively over-awed me, and I am quite unable to express in essay, or poem, or story, all that they send shivering and glowing to my heart. Yiss! juss Boees.

But when it comes to gels—aw, my gough!

*Ships that pass in the Night*—not yet arrived—(overdue). In fact, no ships.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 4, 1897.

I made a mistake in going to Castletown and lecturing there last Wednesday. I lost my voice: it is a wretchedly imbecile condition to be in. I held out for an hour in a sort of bubble-and-squeak fashion, then collapsed. With the kindest and most delightful of hosts, all I could do was to poke about on the edge of an extinct volcano, and try to recover the 'Lost Chord.' But I didn't hook it up from the *βάραθρον*, nor have I yet. Very dismal! though, as no one expects me to speak, I feel it

as a kind of holiday. I promise you I shall never attempt to lecture again.

. . . George Moore has no earthly right to treat Stevenson in that fashion<sup>1</sup>. It seems to me a hideous performance, jumping upon the coffin, not even waiting to dance upon the grave. Moreover I think his criticism is all wrong.

My friend Mr. Quine has brought out his *Captain of the Parish*, a Manx story. It is very good indeed, and we are rallying round the flag, and making a great row with fife and drum. All we can do will be little enough to overcome that prejudice against 'a prophet in his own country,' which seems so inevitable, and is surely so unjust. Quine's women are exquisite. To feel this I am sure that you must be initiated into the medium. It is only fair that we should have some compensation for having been born in such an out-of-the-way place—born, one might say, so eccentrically. It is an every-day experience to flush a prejudice here—to send a whole covey flying promiscuous, or as some one said the other day, to 'rouse the early hen-roost.'

Now, for some paltry reason or another, though born to an inheritance of prejudices, swathed with them, *encaudled* with them, they irritate me beyond all bearance. And the reason is simply that I am so complex and *impeditus* with them. They seem to me to be so respectable, so strong, so grounded on the nature of things, that is, of me.

<sup>1</sup> A reference to an article sent him.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

May 9, 1897.

Yes, it is a garden, I mean ; and I'll swear mine is not amiss. For wallflowers, I brook no trifling. Come, number me them, measure me them, 'colour' me them. You shall see, sir, you shall see. . . .

That reminds me—*lilies of the valley* ? Yes ! oh yes ! Li—li—es of —, certainly. Perhaps they're not in flower yet ; but they are lilies of the valley, are they not ? However, I wouldn't give my Cowslips for all the Lilies in creation. It is true they came the other day from Nash House, picked by E. But there's something in that—eh ? picked, do you mark me ? by E. ; I said *by E.*, didn't I ? All right. They don't smell. No, of course they don't. This starveling of a climate won't give them a chance. But our servant Alice 'stood and exclaimed at them,' 'growin' wile, them beautiful things, growin' wile.'

And Alice, too, is a flower. You must see her. A magnificent creature, 'grew to a dot,' as they say here, *shapely* they mean, 'moves like a piece of poethry.' By Jove ! I've quoted myself, so I'll stop.

The Quantock country, from Crowcombe over to Stowey, I flatter myself I know well, and I recognize it in your charming sketch. 'Clear in an east wind.' Precisely ; and what can be more keenly splendid ? On the Quantocks, though, it is well to be alone, and to wander late into the dark. The solitude brings up

the blessed company of Wordsworth and Coleridge. And there is a parity, a balance of the men and the landscape. More, I think, than at the Lakes. The lake scenery rather absorbs the figures, in whatever relation you place them. But on the Quantocks I have felt them at my side, talked with them, yearned as I couldn't yearn in presence of the big hills. In Cumberland, when alone, there is always for me a sensation of a Brocken Gespenst, the eighteenth-century mountain horror.

On the Quantocks I feel fairies all round me, the good folk, meet companions for young poets. How Coleridge, more especially, fits in to such surroundings! 'Fairies,' say you. Well, 'there's odds o' fairies,' and of the sort I mean Coleridge was the absolute Puck. 'Puck,' says you. 'For shame,' says you. No, d—n it! I'll stick to that. 'There's odds o' fairies'; and often enough I think the world is nothing else; 'troops, societies,' hierarchies—S. T. C. a supreme hierarch; look at his face; think of meeting him at midnight between Stowey and Alfoxden, like a great white owl, soft and plummy, with eyes of flame! . . .

Stick to it, my Worthington! Observe the vagations of drops, carry your acumen into far fields, be patient, wait upon Nature with a plusquam-Baconian *μαιευτική*. Meanwhile I am by your side, a mist, a cloud, an unutterable old goose! Love to you all. Delighted to hear such good accounts of R.

## TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

May 10, 1897.

Will ye be gud now? will ye? T'day that's theer!  
Just botherin' an oul' man, that's what you're afther;  
I know ye. . . .

As a picture of the Mormon migration<sup>1</sup>, you advance another and a later impression; the fair-spoken young Proselytiser of whom you have an imperfect recollection. These men had to be cautious, draw in their horns, be more vague and less enthusiastic in their promises. I have met men of this kind. They neither professed nor excited vehement religious feeling. The old Mormons did.

A.'s failure to represent this is, I think, part of his reluctance to deal with the common people. He sits entrenched in Arrosey, its broad acres, its well-to-do folk. I'm not sure that he's wrong about this. It is as it affects the fortunes of (this class), not as it involves the fate of Tom, Dick, and Harry, that the Mormon migration interests us.

I am sorry you do not feel with me the subtle method with which — handles his scenery, not flinging it down in great masses, diffusing it, humanizing it, making it live and glow.

For my own part, I confess my own utter inability to paint the scenery in this masterly way.

But now we come to the real root of the matter. How can you admire 'Lizzy'? Admire is a cold

<sup>1</sup> He is talking of *The Captain of the Parish*, as in the last letter to Miss Graves (p. 202).

word. I love Lizzy. And here our quarrel is hopeless. You don't like—*divils*; I do. Lizzy is a magnificent *divil*. Indeed, I fancy you will find that, as regards Lizzy, you are in an overwhelming minority. Do consider what you are thinking of. Evidently, as in fact you admit, 'an ordinary good and decent girl.' Lizzy is meant to be nothing of the sort. It does not follow that she is to be an extraordinarily *indecent* girl. Oh dear no; just a *divil*. But about *divils* I can see that the difference in our conceptions is radical. Until you can look upon such a creature, breathless and alarmed for her, loving her, yearning over her, blaming her, *slapping* her, in an awful state as to what is going to become of her—the young wretch, the Divil (give her a capital!), I respectfully decline to discuss the question further. . . .

As you threaten to strike, I see the face of Mrs. Grundy. Yes, Mrs. Grundy, a modified, but clearly perceptible Mrs. Grundy. She's been there all along. I didn't like to mention it; but excuse me, ladies, let me introduce you—'Mrs. Grundy, Miss Graves; Miss Graves, Mrs. Grundy.' And to think it's come to that—aw dear!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 13, 1897.

To-day I got out into the Curraghs, and picked some bog-bean, the very perfection of a lovely flower complicated to an exquisite delicacy both of form and



colour. I picked my specimens to a fine accompaniment of cuckoos, not so numerous as usual; but think of the thermometer!

Meanwhile, unknown to me, but not far off, was a party of archaeologists endeavouring to unearth a fossil elk. I don't know yet whether they were successful. I was endeavouring to unearth a delightful old Manxman whom I met in the wilderness. He reminded me of Wordsworth's leech-gatherer.

My children were with a picnic up Glen Aldhyn. They returned curiously puzzled, partly pleased, partly displeased with the consummate form shown by certain babes of tender years. The 'specialité' was the type of prig. The little folk had the manners and diction of grown-up people, as described in genteel novels, lives of goodie-goodie young persons, published some seventy years ago.

Sandford and Merton were not in it. 'I trust, Miss Brown, that there is now a prospect, however remote, of an amelioration in the weather' (textual) may be taken as a sample. Yet these weird animalcules were really good as gold, and intoxicated with happiness. And you will admit that the fault was on the right side. Good manners—a positive apotheosis of manners which was saved by its rarity from being ludicrous. So I defend them, and their careful parents and trainers.

Much novel-reading makes me, if not mad, yet dreadfully immoral. Most of these critters can write though. Is it not amazing the widespread skill which obtains in this art? They all shout out together, and it is difficult to appreciate the pre-

tensions for the very row they make. A sumptuary law is much required. One private *Lex* may be passed, and that is to write no book oneself. That would tend to make the air clearer, and strengthen the faculty of *judgment*, which just now seems to be going to the devil in a mighty hurry.

And yet I am going to ask you to look at a Novel just written by a friend. Should you come across *The Captain of the Parish*, by J. Quine, I hope you will like it. It is written by a scholar, yet does not obtrude the scholarship. But I must not worry you.

Wait until I send you my copy—wait till—but no, no! What's the good? Let *it* wait with a few thousand others, souls prisoned beneath the altar. The whole sacrarium resounds with their cries—'Lord, how long?'

This cold is frightful.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

May 15, 1897.

Poor Laxey! I wish I could tell you what I feel—the noble spirit of the people, the solemn sadness that has been brooding over their desolate homes<sup>1</sup>! That dear brave Kewley<sup>2</sup>. I long to catch the pulse of the mountain heart and to drink in the depths of the sorrow. . . Poor darling old Laxey! A vale of Baca indeed! God help and comfort you all!

<sup>1</sup> The Snaefell Mine disaster.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Kewley, of Snaefell Mines, acted well, and certainly inspired the men in the attempts to rescue the suffocating or suffocated miners.—J. Q.

## TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

May 18, 1897.

*Knocked you down! kicked you!* Aw no! no! nawthin o' the surt! Juss wantin to get you into the same way of thinking as myself.

I don't mean to settle this here and now. I want not to insult, or hector, or bully, or for a moment figure as a superior person, a critic, a swell, a trained bruiser. Let us take counsel together, not argue; and let us study this question about Genius. I feel quite sure of my ground, my instinctive ground. And I look to you to help me in laying it out by way of rational demonstration.

## TO HORATIO F. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

May 21, 1897.

. . . The *Darley*<sup>1</sup> is wonderful. It flashes all over. A little of his stammering has found its way into his style, if indeed he has any style. How anticipatory he is! A veritable flying-fish, he takes flights across our bows, phosphor flights, and then down into the depths. I wish though he would keep more *en évidence*. There's an awful lot of gorgeous muddle in his track. But I have enjoyed the gleaming phenomena more than I can tell. . . .

Hang these dramatists! They sniff at anything that is not legitimate drama, as if *drama* and *tale* meant the same thing. You saw George Moore

<sup>1</sup> *Nepenthe*, by George Darley, London, 1897.—H. F. B.

the other day, and his attack on Stevenson. These fellows are drawing nigh to the very sanctities. The cry will very soon be, perhaps already is, 'The ark of *Scott* is taken.' If so, I shall be a broken-hearted old Eli. But can't you young men come to the rescue without dreading the fate of Uzzah?

TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

May 28, 1897.

I return the letter, which is quite charming. *Now* do you believe? It doesn't matter to me whom you trust, provided you were to be of a right mind.

But I have still in view the thesis I have started. I will only suggest one point bearing upon the subject. 'Genius is intellectual, not moral.' For instance, it seems probable that the greatest genius in the universe is the *Devil*.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 6, 1897.

On Friday I had a sail from Ramsey to Douglas—quite glorious! Hardly a soul on board. I 'smoked forrard.' Landing at Douglas 'I whusked' (a faint reminiscence of other and better days steamed up from the tumbler), I walked to Braddan churchyard, and had a second pipe by my father's grave. Then walked on to the Asylum, where I saw my old servant, peaceful enough, but such eyes, prepared to flash! I walked among these innocents, conducted

by the doctor, a very nice fellow indeed. I got the train, but first had an extremely pleasant talk with the station-master. I unearthed him, dug, at least, fairly deep into his ancestral roots (Manxmen can't meet anywhere without doing that), made out who he was, and of whom; and, distinctly cheered by the mutual handling of these pedigrees, I took my seat for Crosby, three miles further on. Met at station by two of the oldest friends I have in the world (two brothers, both parsons). I got a cup of tea, and genealogies galore, venerable and accustomed jokes, the myths of inveterate, if invertebrate familiarity. Oh, how good they are for one! The vicar is an old bachelor. I saw and made much of his pets in the back garden. They were two gulls and a cat. The vicar's fondling is funny. He grasps a gull by the bill, dexterously anticipating the gull's nip. Then there is the devil to pay. The gull screams positively with delight and affection, not in anger. The vicar prays you take notice of his dexterity, and the game is continued, or repeated. The brother is an old master, *emeritus*, but still living at R.

We didn't talk much shop. The dear old vicar was a non-conductor of such rubbish. Nay, sir, we were true to ourselves and to one another, meeting, as a rule, only once a year. The genealogies have to be cleared (like the cleaning of gravestones) every time. That is the first necessity. Then we laugh and cry like children. How homely it is! how Manx!

You never before told me anything about the book<sup>1</sup>. *Gratulor*. Also blessed are you in that

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the *Imitation*.

keenly discerning and exquisitely sympathizing sister who so thoroughly knows your weaknesses<sup>1</sup>.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE.

RAMSEY,

June 8, 1897.

I went by the *Fairy* to Douglas on Friday last. We called at Laxey. How exquisite it looked! how sad! . . .

At Braddan, the other day, I had a very sweet dream—the Nunnery, the Clys, Saddle, Churchyard (pipe by my father's grave), Strang, Union Mills—whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell—finishing up at Marown Vicarage. As long as I can 'beat the bounds' in this fashion, I ought not to lose heart. Nor do I for the matter of that. Come and see me! But *here* is different from a walk by Chibber-y-Pherrick and Nickesen! and a nice 'cup-o'-tay' at the Vicarage, and a peep at dear old R., and a lovely all-round cooish (chat, crack), looking up at Snaefell from his back window. . . .

To *imagine* is your function, and with a view to that to eliminate the personal. Your imagination is a *strong* one; but as yet I should say untrained. Call upon it, and you will have a reply in the form of treasures as yet undreamt of. Reject the bribe of the actual, still more the obviousness of the factual, and dig deep. Manx soil down to the Manx rock, but deep, *that* is deep. Only think, 'juss thenk'! . . .

<sup>1</sup> The particular 'weakness' was 'crushed Levant,' in which the *Imitation* was bound.

## TO MISS GRAVES.

RAMSEY,

*June 15, 1897.*

. . . You say you don't believe in a future state, but you have 'gleams of hope.' We are all much in the same plight. So was old Jowett, you remember. Implicit believers in the Bible are all right. Independently of revelation, the matter is a question of metaphysics, and a very subtle one. It has beset humanity from the very beginning, and (this is important) you can't lay the ghost. Rest for a moment from the pressing concerns of the present life, and there you are, you and your question. It is the inevitable attitude of the soul, what one might call its obvious native polarity. 'The gleams' are blessed things, just caught at our noblest throbs and in our most ecstatic moods. That they are ecstatic, as apprehended by us, does not disprove their essential permanence. Rather it suggests the contrary. Metaphysically the balance is in favour of a future state.

To a sceptical nature like mine, the *balance* is everything. That is what I get from my own reflections, or rather, what I got ages ago, helped by Plato, confirmed by Butler. It was done once for all; you can't re-open these metaphysical problems. Let sleeping dogs lie. I invite no one to go back into them with me. To those who have no aptness for metaphysical speculations I would say, 'Stop where you are! Accept the opinion of the majority. The greatest thinkers of all ages have believed in the future state. They

have thought it out for you, be content. In a hundred difficult matters you act upon similar testimony.' Rest assured it is not parsons and such folk that have passed through the region of shadows into the light of the eternal day; no, but the great fixed stars of the human race, pondering, reflecting, judicious. If, at the end of their great communings, somewhat of a rapture of intoxication has seized them, what wonder? They have seen the King in His beauty. Give them credit for honesty, for intelligence, for a sympathy with human wants, for absolute fairness, for burning love. That is how I think of them and feel towards them. With tottering steps I have accompanied them. But that was years ago. Now I don't want to totter, but to walk steadily. Therefore I say, unhesitatingly, 'I believe.' I have encouraged the glimpses, stored them up for the periods of depression which will inevitably break in upon me. Must I always be breaking stones upon the road to heaven? examining and re-examining every inch of the way? proving every rung of the Jacob's ladder? Well, no, I have other things to do.

About Mr. —, for instance, I must see as soon as I can. 'A creature of moods,' you will say. No doubt; but let me grip the moods and bind them into a habit of hopefulness and helpfulness.

'Faith, Hope, Charity, these three,' and which is the greatest?



TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 18, 1897.

Waterloo!

I wonder how many beloved old ghosts will dine together to-day.

And that reminds me of your old gentleman with, or rather without, the dog-ticket<sup>1</sup>. A priceless old darling! A thousand thanks for that impressionist picture. Do you suppose I haven't got him, and his sweet little daughter, too? But, hang it! she needn't be little—that's just my rash way of taking fences.

I have the man here, an exact prototype, a magnificent old chap. He wanted me to play *bowls* with him. Six feet two is his stature; his face the handsomest, I think, I ever saw; his opinions—those of the British Army!

You ask about my health. I am often very weary, and begin to feel that any exertion drains, or, at any rate, strains me. The doctor does not attend me as a regular patient; very intermittently he looks me over, and I don't like to force his reticence. Old age, perhaps, accounts for my condition, but the change has been sudden. What I could have done without a thought a year ago is now far above out of my sight. The liability to neuralgic pains is a novelty and very distressing. The onset of senility altogether is both distressing and humiliating.

<sup>1</sup> A delightful fellow-traveller who charmed me equally by his old-fashioned impatience, which vented itself in a military oath, and by his old-fashioned urbanities.

Could you come and see me? I don't think that you would find me so utterly incommensurate physically as to bore you. A complete disuse of mental intercourse is at times a necessity, but I feel sure you would understand that. We would try to make you comfortable, and sandwiches of solitude are good for us all. Of course, I shall not leave home in August and September. Do think of this. My *card* has grown into a sheet—the sheet garrulous—senility again!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

July 11, 1897.

Worthington is with us. Also glorious weather. What a change! I am a different man. This blessed old *εὐδαίμων* of a creature, *εὐδιάγωγος*, *εὐτράπελος*, *εὐχάριστος*, everything beginning with *εὐ*, he positively recreates me.

We have had some excellent walks, and we shall have more, if matters go on like this.

For instance, my stile-walk on Peel Hill—Mountains of Mourne unquestionably distinguishable, no possibility of doubt<sup>1</sup>, as you know there sometimes is!

The Curragh walk.

Delightful *rencontre* with 'Clerk' in Jurby Post Office (Jurby is the last squeak of expiring civilization). 'Clerk' a girl, a pretty girl, carries pen behind ear like a darling Secretary-bird. No inn within—'Goodness knows!' We summon up courage and

<sup>1</sup> I thought I saw them once when with him, and he contemptuously proved the impossibility.

ask for tea. Tea! (the girl is *Irish*). Tea it is, tea served in the neatest of parlours, the family funeral cards hung round, family silhouettes, photographs (*you* know)! Tea—I believe you! and a tea-service quite lovely, and a *solid silver* tea-pot produced from a cabinet that would not have shamed the boudoir of a duchess.

We tea, we rise, we behold our young hostess in the garden, leaning over a hedge (how nicely they do it! and what an attitude for a well-turned ankle, and skirts that know not of mud and dust!) conversing gaily with *two* (ah, the *two*!) sweethearts sufficiently decorous.

*Que faire?* To pay, to ask what we have to pay. We approach, hands fumbling in uncertain pockets. Behold! the demoiselle will have none of it. Close at hand are the grave, serious-looking, very much interested sweethearts. They narrowly scrutinize the issue. Was it not ridiculous? *She ought to have taken our money?* Perhaps so. She was not in a position to be our hostess. But why not? *We had not been introduced!!* O dear old Madam Society! No, we had not, and the refusal to take money was a claim to *equality*? However this may be, we looked awful fools. What we did was to try and re-establish something like an understanding—well, I suppose so, a basis of—call it *equality*. We phrased, we grimaced, we bowed, we did the drawing-room business, and so retired a good deal mortified. All they wanted was a straightforward ‘Thank you!’ and no more words about it.

Perhaps it was a consciousness of this failure that

made me ask the next man we met the name of a farm close by (*his* farm, I think) without any superfluous circumlocution, yet, I trust, not impolitely. The reply was given with an abruptness, not to say a ferocity of downright insolence. I thanked him, and turning to W., said quietly, 'No waste of civility, I think.' W. says he believes he heard me. Evidently he repented his rudeness, and we could observe that he did not, while we were within hearing, resume his conversation with the friend who stood beside him. 'The Lesser Morals,' you will say. 'Lesser,' no doubt, but 'morals' and vital conditions for all that.

TO MRS. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

July 11, 1897.

Don't be alarmed! We are all right. It is Sunday; your husband has gone to Sulby. I am resting after our walk of yesterday; and, quietly brooding over my responsibility, I think I must write to you. The responsibility is fulfilling itself charmingly, in the fact that we are both having a very happy time. That is what you meant us to have, was it not? And the weather has taken up the matter quite seriously and interposed a guarantee of positive splendour. Upon my word this much-abused old bungler is doing her very best.

It is rather late for some of the good things. We were reminded of that yesterday in rambling through the Curragh. The bog-bean was all over, the cuckoo

had gone. But certain reeds and grasses were magnificent, and your husband was so delighted that to-day he is off there again, sketching. The days are long, and, as the sun sets, 'the moon takes up the wondrous tale.' I don't expect him home much before bed-time. And when he comes he will be steeped in glowing colours. No man is more capable of these things. He will not, I think, climb much, but tarry on the plain, contemplating, ruminating.

TO MISS GRAVES.

*July 19, 1897.*

I went on to the Sport Venn, and tried to dream, but the flies did for me and my dreams, curse them! Afterwards I was joined by my companion, who bathed at the foot of the fall, thereby exciting my keenest envy. The sketch turned out a great success. The cottage had splendid roses standing up against the roof and the blue sea. The roses run absolute riot in Michael, and more especially in this Ballagawne Glen. — is not 'a sweet old thing,' but she has her good points. One can hardly count among them her lightness of heart, when I tell you that the day we had tea with her two years ago her husband's body 'hadn' left the door above a week' — a terrible old wife of Bath, but 'navar mind.' The lek is in, and well they are when ye consider what they've got to do. But the 'sweet oul' thing' came from another cottage. My friend sketched her cottage too. She was quite the reverse of Madam —. Not over-neat, no! laak she'd forgot or tuk on the sudden

lek. Ready to pour out her soul in tender fluency. *Sweet?* Ah, that woman was sweet. Slatternly? Well, no, not azakly ither. Not *dressed?* Well, not to speak of, but rich in personal charm. Teeth? Well, if you insist, *no* then, and be qui(e)te, will ye? Eyes? Heaven itself, only brown, not blue. Kindest remembrances to —.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

July 21, 1897.

Blessed be you in your land of trees, also water-lilies, sunshine, 'sedulous and accomplished gardeners.'

. . . . .

F. is greatly concerned about having missed you. Already he has sketched out a Jurby and Andreas visitation. It will include the hospitable post-mistress, and the churl at Ballavanane. We want to see whether he is really churl, and to reserve a *locus poenitentiae* for him. We shall flash upon him with full clerical splendour.

This is to help the resipiscential process, though I'm not sure that he does not owe me an apology as the mere shabby old tripper, the character in which I must abide in his memory, if I abide at all. . . .

About the Manx woman we met in the coach. I was quite right. Sure enough she was the only Manx woman there, and as proud as old Harry. She is a splendid gardener, sells fruit, &c.

. . . . .

As reason would have it, she has sundry scare-crows in her garden. It pleased F. to discover in these a source of decorous clerical mirth. 'Are all these yours?'—'your children?' Suddenly the babes tottered from behind a bush. *Solvuntur tabulae risu*. Did you think she had that laugh in her?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

August 2, 1897.

Yesterday I went to ——. A nice man there. He is an old scholar. Imagine my surprise when he began to talk most intelligently and charmingly of Homer. You might have knocked me down with a feather. Moreover, he used the compendious scholarly words which save so much trouble, lighten the atmosphere, and make one feel at home. You were quite safe in talking about the Wolfian Thesis, and calling so-and-so a Dichotomist without further periphrasis. The ceiling fairly trembled with the sounds.

The old Scotch scholar's daughter sat with us, very bright and sympathetic.

Father and daughter were delightful, and didn't we christen the house with some pedantries in the fullness of our hearts, notwithstanding the staleness of our Hellenic vocabularies. I really felt myself twenty years younger.

TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

*August 7, 1897.*

Yes, I must plead guilty to considerable vagabondage on a small Manx scale ; nothing like yours though ! On July 25, I drove over to Lonan with a friend—Horatio Brown. Lunched at Chibber-y-Pherrick, and went down into Glen Roy and Nickesen. My friend, a full Alpine person, I am sorry to say, did not seem much taken with these little gems. What he really did admire was the view of sea and cliff at Dreem-y-jees-sking. Magnificent it looked that morning.

Aug. 3. Went to Vicarage, and found you and Mrs. Quine were not at home. We continued to Chibber ; lunched (now habitual). . . . Afterwards, at Laxey, I never saw such a scene<sup>2</sup>. It reminded me of Lourdes on a day of high festival. Good gracious ! then up to God's silence and the eternal decencies. Through Agneash we ascended to the col between Slieu Ouyr and Slieu Lhean making for the N. Snaefell mine and the Corony stream. Here it got dark. I could have sworn I could hit the track blindfolded. However, 'no such thing' if you please. You should bear on the left when you get on the level. Ever so little on the right, and there you are right down to Ballig, a beastly system of concatenated stone walls—the very deuce !

<sup>1</sup> After my return from Scotland with the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, of New Zealand.—J. Q.

<sup>2</sup> The visiting season, and Laxey full of trippers.—J. Q.



TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

August 7, 1897.

About Bernard Grenfell's *find*. I can't get rid of suspicion as to the *motive* of compiling these *λόγια*. Suppose an early century, when gnostic disputes were dividing the Church, what would be more probable than collections of *λόγια* made by the opposite factions, with the view of appropriating the authority of Xt.? And what more probable than forgery? In such an age these fiery controversialists would make no scruple of inventing any blessed thing. And fancy Egypt! the very country for such spawn.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

September 3, 1897.

I have often seen Brougham Castle, but only from the line. The river Eamont, or Lowther (which?) is beautiful there. And all these things I shall never see again. 'I cannot but remember such things were.' Well, never mind: what they have been to me, they are and will be to others. Keep up the *cultus*!

You are a perfect pilgrim. All points of the compass take you.

And the Roman wall: that, too, I shall never see, The High Force I have seen, and liked it very much.

I well remember the effect of the junipers growing about the Fall—quite a foreign look I thought.

'Q.' has been entrusted with one of Stevenson's stories to finish. Not *Weir of Hermiston*, though. That must not be touched till the Resurrection Morn. Did you tell me of this, or was it Hall Caine? I have just been to Douglas *with my teeth* !!

Remember me very kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Baker.

PS.—Your exquisite roses from Oxford to hand, to eyes, to nose! We all thank you heartily.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

September 19, 1897.

On Sunday last I preached at St. Matthew's, Douglas. For strength very well indeed, but as regards whether matter or manner, quite deplorably, the merest midden of wild rhetoric. That is what I am becoming. Of course I could provide against these humiliating escapades by writing my sermons. But my day is over, and I had better shut up in a profound discontent (something like that in Milton's *Prose Works*?).

It was very dreadful. After that I could not sleep, and what marvel? The *labes* grows upon me. And I was preaching where every stone should have cried out against me. You have seen what I say of my father. Imagine such things issuing from his lips!

In Douglas I called upon A. M. He was just about to entertain some Americans to dinner. I sat down with them. They belonged to Denver City, such

nice, quiet, modest people, men and women. I find I always get on with Americans. Perhaps you will say that, upon my confession above, it is easy to see why. But I said they were quiet and modest. Was my sermon that ?

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

RAMSEY,

September 23, 1897.

I believe I am coming to England on October 1. Such has been the motive power of Clifton friends—partly they urged, partly they demonstrated to me my renewed energies. Brief, I come. First it will be Wales, however, to October 4—Tannyralt near Abergele, with my grand-niece. Then to Clifton. ‘Yiss, indeed’—on W.’s wedding day. . . .

I have had another climb ; *dux femina facti*, and again Slieu Whallian and Glen May, and again a disaster, and only nine miles of mountain. No doubt I must give up all this kind of thing. . . .

The summer dies rather like myself, hard, *invitus*. October will play the deuce with it. I dare say I had better stay at home. However, I am over-persuaded : so here goes ! Old R. came to see me from Laxey on Tuesday. He climbed Snaefell by tramcar, then walked down from the top by the new Douglas road. He was as fresh as paint. . . .

I can now reckon up my gains.

Mozley,  
Worthington,  
Hor. Brown,

Irwin,  
Hanby Hay,  
Wollaston, and Sandy with Tait.  
Not a bad lot, sir !  
N.B.—Very kindest regards to Mrs. Worthington,  
to  
Robert,  
Charlotte,  
Margaret (*deliciolae*!).

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

September 28, 1897.

Your memory, as regards correspondence, is ferocious and relentless: I am a very leaky vessel.

I suppose this arises from the fact that you are a keen anecdotist—a collector—and I am not. You know how I enjoy a good story, but I have not the *animus* of retention.

In this commerce I am singularly inept. Indeed you must have observed it in my conversation.

I expect to be in Clifton on October 4.

Henley intends, I hear, a collected edition of his poems. He is right: his place is ready, and a high one—higher, I fancy, than his contemporaries would assign him.

That S. looks forward to work this Term, I confess, makes me feel uncomfortable. What a thoroughbred he is! I suppose he will not be put off his purpose. Greet him warmly from me. Let there not be a word of discouragement, nothing but my heartiest congratulations.

About the Grenfell memorial—I am most anxious to be included among the subscribers.

Poor dear old fellow! I shall hope to see Moor's grave; but I can never hope to see his.

To sit at a masters' meeting would greatly please me. But I don't think 'the like' has ever been done: so I abandon the idea no sooner than penned.

I remember Mayor's mimicry.

At his age, I was much given to such joys. Even now I feel like an old horse who scents the battle, or something 'similar the same.'

TO THE REV. J. QUINE<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

September 30, 1897.

Your sketch of the Islay interior very charming. . . . Mr. Kernish, of Cleveland (i.e. Ohio, U.S.A.), entertained Hanby Hay, when the great oration was delivered about this time last year<sup>2</sup>. Hanby reported, &c., some of you young people ought to go to Cleveland. It would be delightful. At Arthur Moore's the other day I met certain Americans called Mather (lineal descendants of 'Cotton'). They were a very good sort. I purpose crossing to Liverpool tomorrow, if all be well, *en route* for Abergele, Clifton, and London. Can you promise me decent weather?

All in good time—*The Captain* will win its way in America, as elsewhere, on its sterling merits.

<sup>1</sup> The only postcard I ever received from him. It struck me as strange, unusual. I did not think then, though I knew he was not his old self, that it was to be the last.—J. Q.

<sup>2</sup> Really at Christmas.—J. Q.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

26 COLLEGE ROAD,

October 27, 1897.

Sure enough here I am, and you are right entirely. I left the Island on Oct. 1, and I shall be leaving here on Saturday, Oct. 30, for Liverpool. Then I hope to see my nephew and his family, and go to hibernation.

Stayed first with the Wollastons for ten days, then withdrew to Cardiff, where I put up at my sister's for another ten days, went to Dean Vaughan's funeral, and called upon our old Clifton Vaughan. Then I came back to Clifton on Monday last. Poor Jupp was *in extremis*, died the same evening about 9.30. . . .

He is to be buried in Sutherlandshire<sup>1</sup>, where his brother is the clergyman. . . .

This flight straight across the unsympathetic latitudes! . . . At the chapel, and away, away into the long night alone.

Influenza<sup>2</sup>, and two other masters down and the doctors nonplussed.

Tait, Wollaston and I are going to-night to a Richter<sup>3</sup> concert. We are not in much fettle for it. Your long and delightful letter meets with but a poor equivalent in this hasty scrawl. But I will write

<sup>1</sup> A mistake, Sunderland it was.—H. G. D.

<sup>2</sup> It proved to be typhoid, the origin of which was traced.—H. G. D.

<sup>3</sup> He enjoyed the Richter concert. This was *Wednesday*. He himself died the following Friday night.—H. G. D.

again. I ought to say, though, there is no chance of my coming round by Haslemere.

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[*This, I think, must have been his last letter to any one. On the Thursday he dined with me and seemed his usual bright self, and read one of his poems at my sister's request, but did not finish it, saying he was tired. He was staying with Mr. Tait, and on Friday evening gave an address to the boys of his House. He spoke for some minutes with great vigour, then suddenly his voice grew thick, and he seemed to stagger. He died in less than two hours.*]





## APPENDIX

### LETTERS TO S. T. IRWIN.

#### FOUR FRAGMENTS (UNDATED).

On a Manx MS.<sup>1</sup> discovered at Copenhagen.

AN extraordinary thing has happened. Somewhere towards the year 1700, one Rutter, a Christ Church man, I think, held the Archdeaconry of Sodor and Man, having presumably been appointed thereto by the Derbies. He seems to have been a kind of court poet. We all knew him as the author of a humorous epitaph (his own):—

‘In hac domo quam a vermiculis accepi (confratribus meis) spe resurrectionis ad vitam jaceo Sam. permissione divina Episcopus hujus insulae.

Siste lector—vide et ride palatium episcopi.’

He died Bishop of Man, but in his Archdeacon days he evidently considered the writing of ‘occasional’ verses as one of his Archidiaconal functions. In his time there came to the island a Danish Professor (*credite posteri!*), the forerunner of the Vigfussons, &c., of our own time. He received from Rutter, as

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Letter to Miss E. Brown, Dec. 11, 1892.

a linguistic curiosity, what purported to be a Manx poem, with an English translation. No one here, or, as far as I can make out, anywhere, knew of this poem, its whereabouts, or even its existence, till the other day a friend of mine was in Copenhagen, and in the library there happened to turn over the MS. papers left by the old Danish professor. We none of us had ever heard of such a person, or his visit to the Isle of Man, a fact in itself extremely improbable. But he had been there, and he had conversed with our choice spirits—Rutter, Philip Moore, &c., and he had taken home with him to Copenhagen what I now deliberately consider one of the most precious finds that have been made for many years in the department of late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century literature. But you shall judge for yourself.

Here is the English *Translation* (?).

*Chorus.*

Let the world run round,  
Let the world run round,  
And know neither end nor station.  
Our glory is the test  
Of a merry merry breast  
In this little quiet nation.

I.

We eat, we drink, we laugh, we sing,  
To-morrow freely comes and goes,  
We strike up music's gentle string,  
And understand no other blows.  
Let the world, &c.

## II.

If any sour unhallowed breath  
Our harmless sports should dare defile,  
Let that man fall in love with death,  
Whilst we the griefs of life beguile.  
Let the world, &c.

## III.

What though our peace much envy'd be,  
Our fears they need not to increase,  
For everywhere abroad we see  
That men do even fight for peace.  
Let the world, &c.

## IV.

Thus, from all enemies secure,  
Our heads and hearts are light as air,  
Not made the heavy yoke t'endure  
Of too much wealth or too much care.  
Let the world, &c.

## V.

Gold, and the troubled strife for gold,  
Are evils unto us unknown :  
Our clothing's neither gay nor cold,  
It covers us, and it's our own.  
Let the world, &c.

## VI.

We do not liberty contrive  
Ourselves in bondage for to bring,  
As birds to snare do haste alive,  
By the loose freedom of the wing.  
Let the world, &c.

## VII.

Our shepherds on their reeds do play,  
Charming their sweethearts, and their sheep,  
Neither of which do go astray,  
By nature taught their bounds to keep.  
Let the world, &c.

## VIII.

Our mistresses are still the same,  
No rivals blowing at our fire;  
We live and frolic in love's flame  
Without the pain of fond desire.  
Let the world, &c.

## IX.

If any fool on change be bent,  
And think to thrive the Lord knows when,  
Let him first go and learn what's meant  
By excise and committee men.  
Let the world, &c.

## X.

The master of these festive sports,  
Commander of the truest hearts,  
Takes to himself the serious thoughts,  
And leaves to us the merry parts.  
Let the world, &c.

## XI.

Lo now, good master, health to thee!  
And, if there's one who will not pass  
The cup, let him hence banished be,  
To quench his thirst in the Dhoo-glass.  
Let the world, &c.

There you are now! and that from Copenhagen!! What do you think of it? The joke of the matter is that the Manx verses are very nearly as good as the English, and the translation, either way, is marvellously close. I could give you a literal translation of the Manx, which would convince you of this.

Now the question naturally arises, which is original, and which translation? I believe the English to be the original, although it purports to be the translation. To make this plain would be a long business, and a subtle. But I am nearly certain of my game.

How splendidly contemptuous is verse 9! Conservative? I should think so! The Manx of this verse has 'Let him think of the French country, what law and harsh taxes are there.' Evidently, as I think, the Manx translator ran away from the not obvious 'excise (ēxcise) and committee men.'

Do excuse these *Lusus Monenses*. You would not have me otherwise than full of them—would you?

On the proposal to have an English Literature School at Oxford.

You ask me what I think of the new School. I don't care for it. If we are to set up a 'School' for every subject, which it is desirable to encourage and foster among young Englishmen, where are we to stop? Cookery? Independently of its classical associations, is not this an important subject? Though, whether it be advisable to encourage it beyond the limits which nature has established, and which seem sufficiently wide, I know not. Anything that takes off good men from the Classics is to be deprecated. And the twaddle of these English scholars is endless. Even

the best of them—Skeat, for instance—can we trust them not to encroach?

And what is the end of this English? English language, English literature: 'On! on!' German, High German, Low German, Icelandic, Sanscrit, when will you stop?

Not a word about Language then, that is too large an order. Let us limit ourselves to the Literature. Yes, but when will you pull up the desire to *approfondir*?

It is a tremendous field. Divide it, take the poetry alone, probably the most likely to be chosen. I know the man, so do you, who will insist, almost as a preliminary, upon a complete course of the laws which govern English metre. Yes, and to the *De re metrica Anglica* will want to add a conspectus of English *Phonetics* (!!). Once let them in, and won't they go it?

And then the rise of a whole school of Hermeneutics, with its infernal appendage of coaches, handbooks, cramming-books.

Can you face this monster of the deep? Textual criticism would come last—felicitous conjectures! Bibliography, and all the paths, pleasant, no doubt, and profitable as hobbies for a man above thirty. But *educational*? Your book-hunter would cry from the distance; and the Quais of Paris would find their way into the illimitable cycle of what every man ought to know.

Meantime, as the Gods will, we go each his own way to cultivate what pleases us. Could anything be better? I mean after taking one's degree.

Does F. think he would have profited by any such compulsory, or quasi-compulsory, or seductively permitted course of study? Why does he not take it up now? There is nothing to prevent him. I know full well that such a man never applies the clôtüre to his education. And one may exaggerate the advantages of an early familiarity with a branch of learning, especially when it lies in the direction of that noxious humbug, Universality. As the years roll on, I doubt not many a hammer will ring at the fastness of the classics. Possibly an entire disruption may take place. But if ever there was a case of my favourite Virgilian—*Antiquam exquirite*—it will be that of England when it awakes from this dream which is only not lewd because it is fatuous. The awakening is sure to come. The study of Greek may for a while be confined to the epigraphists of our School at Athens; but it will revive with tremendous force. And a new generation will demand of us what we have done with so precious an inheritance. But I wax rhetorical and ridiculous.

Sixteenth-century Latin.

It is an old taste of mine that sixteenth, seventeenth-century Latin. There I can always be happy. A modern, garrulous Latin full of goosey, goosey-gander and Aulus Gellius. The pure classic meanwhile languishes in me. I am getting not ripe, but old, *so* old. A half-wish, an almost despairing wish to climb the immortal heights, and then a subsidence into gossip, twaddle, rot. How can I save myself? Hellebore? Ah, it is hard. . . .

On a new Review sent him edited by Undergraduates.

Clearly there are clever people engaged upon it. But it betrays that fault, which is so common, and yet surely so inexcusable in youth—the affectation of maturity.

Boys should write like boys. Let them perfect their style, but let their enthusiasm, their splendid errors, their follies, their rashness, their *immaturity* be all there. They are boys, they have the great and priceless advantage of youth. Is it not too bad that they should also snatch at the advantages, solid though they may be, yet sad, that belong to their seniors? And then the direction—agnosticism and so forth—politics, and all the *sordes* thereto pertaining.

Wit, as it hovers in the fine air of literary criticism and controversy, is what they ought to aim at. Humour is forbidden to them. They would fain fly at everything, but I would break them in like pointers. What say you? There is something very melancholy, inept, *scorbutic* in the young free-thinker. He is on his wrong diet. Perhaps my old friends of 1780, who never had a doubt about a blessed thing, but pelted one another like schoolboys with classical snowballs, have made me more than ordinarily impatient with these unbreeched philosophers. But——

#### ARCHDEACON MOORE<sup>1</sup>.

I first knew Archdeacon Moore in 1848. Long before that I had seen him at my father's vicarage,

<sup>1</sup> These reminiscences were written for the Rev. E. Kissack, then curate of Kirk Andreas, who preached the sermon on the occasion of a memorial being dedicated to the Archdeacon.



and heard him preach in Kirk Braddan church when he was staying at Cronkbourne. I remember that his way of preaching did not take me. I was accustomed to two styles of preaching, widely different from his, and from each other. I admired my father's sermons, so exquisite in diction, so fastidiously consummate, yet warm with the suppressed glow of a fine poetic nature; and I was interested in sermons like those of Dr. Carpenter, homely, vigorous, and full of zeal, full of illustration. The Archdeacon's method in the pulpit was to me something quite new. He was so pithy, so sententious, so absolutely without ornament, so wise, and I suppose I must admit, so odd, that I could not take to him. I did not know the double source of that compound—the shrewd, racy, native humour which was the Archdeacon's own, and the reading of our old English divines in which his soul so much delighted.

It was on a very bright frosty night at Christmas-tide of 1848-1849 that I rode with him in his carriage from Tromode to Andreas. Our companion, besides Cannell, was Mr. Trollope, at that time I think curate of Jurby. To see the Archdeacon at home was to learn to love him. The very arrangements of that home, its order, its simplicity, its decent regard of ancient usage, the spirit it breathed of peace and good-will, the affectionate devotion of servant to master and master to servant, the perfect concord—all this irresistibly attracted me to him who was the very key and centre of this harmony.

The Christmas dinner was a scene never to be forgotten. It was held in the large kitchen of the

Rectory: all the servants of the household were of course there, besides all those who worked in any capacity on the glebe. The Archdeacon presided. In the midst of all the brightness and happiness a strange weird face was seen at the door, a face whose weakness was redeemed by a smile of heavenly quietude—it was an old friend of mine, a still older friend perhaps of the Archdeacon, Chalse-y-Killey. Chalse was heartily welcomed. There was nothing more remarkable in the Archdeacon than his unfeigned compassion for poor innocents. He seemed to look upon them as children, his own children, and yearn over them with a tenderness curiously blended with playfulness. I never have witnessed the mind of Christ so lively expressed in mortal face or voice.

It would have been impossible to live long under this roof without appreciating the sterling character of my dear and venerable friend. I soon began to like his preaching: I felt its force, I felt how natural it was, how genuine, and how wise, for that is perhaps the word that best conveys the impression produced by these discourses. Nor did I fail to perceive that they sometimes rose to real eloquence and a kind of rugged grandeur. But one always noticed the wisdom; and that wisdom it was my good fortune and privilege to see carried out daily in practical life. I must have seen the Archdeacon in almost every circumstance of domestic and pastoral routine; I have seen him in the school, at the vestry meeting, at dinner with his wardens, conducting family prayers in a way quite peculiar to himself and wholly excellent, in the field, in the cottage, at

a club, at an auction of his own farm-stock and material, and I learned in all these particulars that make up the daily task of ordinary activity to revere this good and most kindly man. All that I had read in biographies of holy men, heightened no doubt and coloured by a youthful inspiration, seemed realized in the Archdeacon. He helped me to picture to myself what of saintly and helpful I had observed in the characters of our great divines, whether Church or Nonconformist—in Hooker, in Baxter, in Jeremy Taylor. And knowing how he rejoiced in these pillars of the Christian faith, how steeped he was in their writings, how he ran instinctively upon the lines of their thought and of their very phrase, I took the greater pleasure in noting the outcome of ripe studies and long familiarity with the magnificent originals. I do not think that the Archdeacon's reading extended even to the early Christian Fathers, but our own Anglican Fathers he knew well. From all taint of the movement with which he must have been contemporary at Oxford he was absolutely free. He was a sound evangelical Churchman.

I ought to say a word about his great liking for young persons, and his happy way of dealing with them. In the latter respect he was all but unerring. It was his custom to gather round him at the Rectory a number of young men, generally sons of old friends, who were likely to take holy orders. And young folk are thoughtless, impetuous, perhaps over-confident at times. It was a real heavenly wisdom which guided the Archdeacon in his relations to these youthful friends, many of them friends of my own, in whose

case I had the opportunity of tracing the effect of his loving-kindness and sober counsel. I suppose love is knowledge, and love it was that gave him this keen insight. Love was the master power; but beside this deep spring of action, the Archdeacon had an extraordinary faculty of appreciating minute points of character, indeed everything minute. Nothing was too small for him. This faculty was in him very strong; it was closely connected with his eminently social disposition, connected too with another power, the controlling power of patience, of long-suffering. I have seen that patience sorely tried, and I do not mean to say that it always bore the strain. The Archdeacon was a thorough Manxman, but one who had been trained in a courtly school, and had learned to know the world as perhaps few Manxmen have ever known it. This gave to his conversation, and to his estimate of men and things, a colour as of worldly wisdom. But it was not that: it was practical sagacity, based upon long and select observations. We felt, with the Archdeacon, that we had to deal with a gentleman—with a gentleman of the old school—with one whose experience could be of service to us, no matter what path of life we might follow. In short, he was an able and accomplished guide, a grand master-pilot for any waters. He loved the Isle of Man, and served it loyally. I could scarcely tell whether the Church or State in Man had the greatest share of his affection. He was alive to everything that might improve the material condition of the people: was interested in farming, in the development of trade, in all social and political questions as they arose, pre-eminently in

education. And here we naturally pass to the more spiritual side of his character. A thorough churchman, he zealously guarded the honour of the Establishment. I hardly think the Archdeacon conceived of the Church as otherwise than established. This might have been a weakness, a limitation, but it was thoroughly characteristic of the class of divines to which he belonged. Above all matters of party, however, the Archdeacon rose to the highest, the widest views. Not that he was what is commonly called a broad churchman. He was, first and foremost, a sincere and humble believer in Jesus Christ, and to him all Christian men were brethren. During my long intercourse with him, I never heard him speak bitterly of Dissenters. Affectionately, rather, for he had no bitterness in him. Sorrow he had, but that he reserved for the faithless members of his own Communion.

You are looking at the new pulpit, and reading-desk, and Lord's table. I will, in imagination, go outside and stand by his grave. The old mountains are not far off, the grass at my feet is still green, and everywhere there is the stillness, the unutterable blessing of peace; and peace is the blessed lot of him who lies beneath, the peace of God which passeth all understanding—*Shee yee ta erskyn dy chooilley hushtey*.

TO J. A. SYMONDS.

CLIFTON,

February 5, 1892.

Thank you for your very kind letter. . . .

The dear old man himself is the constant subject

of my thoughts. I think he is doing right; but of course I can't sketch out a future for him, and people do so fuss about that; even he himself stands rebuked before a whole nation demanding of him that he shall do *something*.

To me also this language is held—'Well, now, what will you *do* when you *do* retire?' '*Do!*' God bless my soul! I have everything to do: I have to save my soul alive, for one small item. As yet I have not even done that: in short I have done nothing, seen nothing, heard nothing, and read nothing.

Every now and then these big blanks of vacuum come bursting around me with a sort of flop that is quite dreadful. Just the other day I felt this so strongly about Music, for instance, and, briefly, of Opera. I mentioned it to some one who turned upon me a face more vacuous than the most portentous of my vacuums, and evidently didn't know what I was driving at. And Literature (Classical if you like, nothing more), and painting, and my poor little peerings into the hearts of men and women—why there's no end.

And when I go hence what shall I be worth, not in a Court of Probate, but in the Chancery of Him with whom it will rest to determine whether so sorrily finished a soul shall continue to be?

I am not at all sure that immortality will not turn out to be a conditional thing, the conditions being in no way theological, but natural, almost mechanical. A soul that has got weight and momentum will naturally tend to go on. A light-textured paper-bag sort of soul will be blown by 'A violent cross-wind . . .

transverse . . . into the devious air.' . . . We don't know—a force of persistence may be generated by the *nîsus* of progression, and, morally, we may be worth going on with. But, if the *prochain numéro* is never to be issued, and our story breaks off quite suddenly and incomplete, I am quite satisfied ; I would not trouble the 'Omnipotens et Sempiternæ' about such a trifle.

TO E. M. OAKELEY.

SCHWEIZERHOF, LUZERN,

July 21, 1881.

I have just heard of Stanley's death, and cannot refrain from writing you a line. I know how you loved him. He died the very evening I passed under the shadow of his favourite hill, the Rigi. . . .

Last night the Rigi started up uneasily about every other second in a restless glare of most lovely lightning. There was no thunder : a silent shimmering dirge ;—and that I think the good Dean would have loved. Almost at the very moment he died I was up and restless too. The lake was very quiet : only from time to time there passed over it towards me the softest imaginable shudder, and the moon between two stars sat just above the Rigi.

I am coming back to England, and I feel deeply how different it is without Stanley. Something is gone that sparkled through her gloom with a brilliancy that was so alien, and yet so thoroughly her own. When the history of our century comes to be written, as it is to be hoped men will some day write history, how exactly will our children perceive, how keenly

will they regret, this lost perfume that so delicately haunted the central aisle! So I think of him; very much indeed as of a perfume, subtle, exquisite. . . .

Luzern is very beautiful, but just now very hot, and very noisy. . . . On the whole, our poor British come out first. You hear little of the more vulgar-speaking English; and tone, pure unconditioned tone, is, to say the least, a physical condition of importance; also among them prevails much of that finest music, silence. Our satirists have done good; the English here are markedly the most modest, the most polite, the most decent and self-controlled of all the people we meet. The Scots are even better, having more *élan* and fire; being more sociable and capable of initiative. I have also met some glorious Irish folk.



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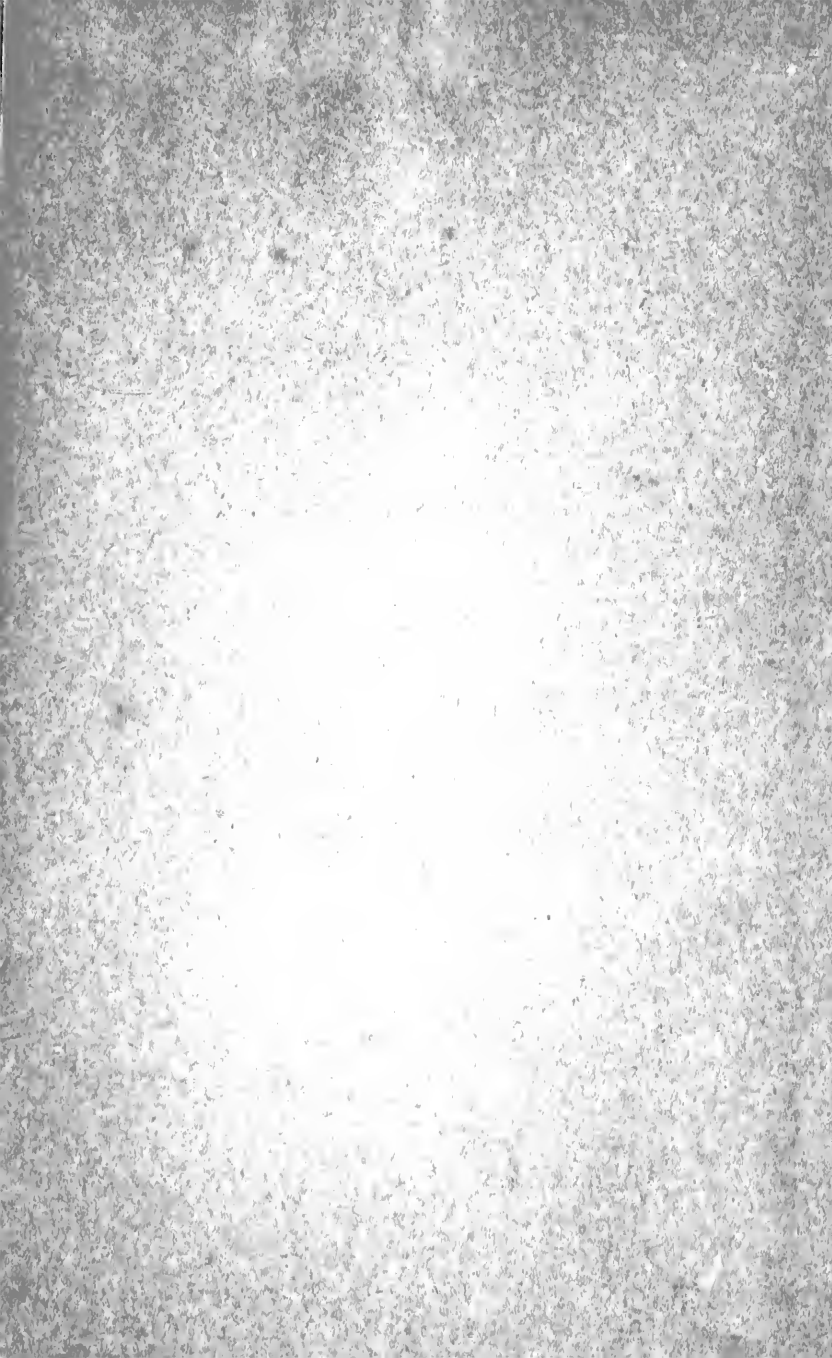
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